



The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure LI – The Adventure of the Creeping Man

Publishing History

51 of the 60 stories

First Published in *The Strand Magazine*, March, 1923

In the US *Hearst's International Magazine*, March, 1923

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

John Murray, London, 1927

George D. Doran, New York, 1927

British illustrator – H. K. Elcock

American Illustrator – Frederick Dorr Steele

Chronology

Baring-Gould places the dating of the story at Sunday, September 6 to

Monday, September 14 and Tue, Sept 22, 1903 making it 58th of the 60. This means that Holmes was 49 and

Watson 51.



Christopher Morley Says

“Holmes was ahead of his time in foreseeing the uses of dogs in detective work, and this case was another of the instances of “the peculiar behavior of the dog in the night-time.” Why did Professor Presbury’s faithful wolfhound attempt to attack his master? The solution lay in some dangerous experiments in modern medicine which made Holmes dubious about the future. He was already (this was 1903) thinking of “that little farm of my dreams.””

Dummies Short Summary

This story has a dash of science fiction in it. When an aging professor begins treating himself with a mysterious serum, he undergoes a startling transformation!

How Many Words

At 7,726 words CREE has the 24th most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 is NAVL – 12,701)

Classifying This Case

This case is one of 7 classified as fear of physical harm or public scandal. The others were COPP, GLOR, TWIS, SUSS, SCAN, & 3STU

The Best Of Sherlock Holmes

Why did the BSI have such a big change?

- 1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle did not on his list of 12 favorites.
- 1959 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 55th on list of favorites.
- 1999 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 29th of 56 short stories.
- 1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 46th of the 56 short stories The Baker Street Irregulars voted it.

What Else Happened That Year (1903)

- **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" **Jan 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)
visits San Francisco
- **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 officers - 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

Holmes is at 221B but he dramatically summoned Watson from (?) with a laconic message.

Dramatis Personae

- **Professor Presbury**, 61 year old physiologist with an international reputation.
- **Alice Morphy Presbury**, his wife and his junior by about 40 years.
- **Edith Presbury**, his daughter by a former marriage. She is engaged to ...
- **Trevor “Jack” Bennett**, Prof. Presbury’s professional assistant and personal secretary.
- **Professor Morphy**, holds the chair of comparative anatomy and is Prof. Presbury’s colleague and father-in-law.
- **Roy**, the Presbury’s wolfhound
- **H. Lowenstein**, physiologist in Prague who supplied a serum to Presbury via the agent...
- **A. Dorak**, Lowenstein’s agent in London. A Bohemian with a large general store.
- **Mercer**, an assistant of Holmes who does some of the leg work.
- **Macphail**, able-bodied coachman of the Presburys

Quotable Sherlock

Not a lot of memorable comments here.

- “Come at once if convenient – if inconvenient come all the same.”
- “You never learn that the gravest issues may depend upon the smallest things.”
- “Always look at the hands first, Watson. Then cuffs, trouser knees, and boots.”

Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen

Kind of an “eerie,” we’re surprised it wasn’t done more.

- 2001 *The Adventure of the Creeping Man* as an episode of *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century* (Animated TV series)
- 1991 *The Creeping Man* with Jeremy Brett as one of his 43 episodes for BBC / Granada

Annotated Sherlock

- **“a tangled skein”** This was originally ACD’s title for *A study in Scarlet*.
- **“a cannula”** A tube to be inserted into a cavity, through which pus may be drained or medicine introduced.
- **“lumbago”** rheumatism of the lumbar muscles in the lower back, frequently caused by a muscle strain or a slipped disc

- “alienist” a psychiatrist; from the French **aliéne**, meaning insane

Holmes The Author

Holmes mentions his plans to write and publish *On the Use of Dogs in Detective Work*

Weapons

Nothing contrived to be a weapon was used in this story. The other two were 3STU and YELL

Frank Mentzel