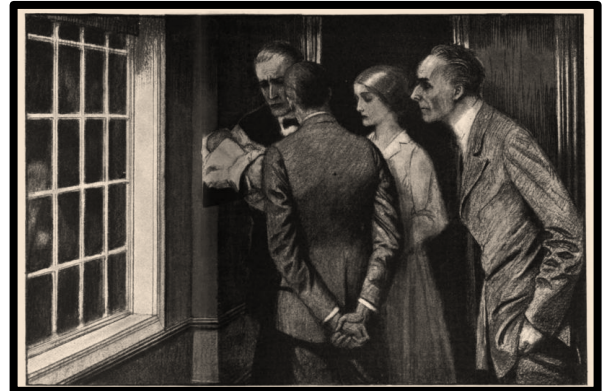


## The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure LII – The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire

Well, it's not exactly Buffy or Twilight but it's just as far-fetched, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

I really want to like this story – it's something a bit different and the title makes it sound very exciting but I just can't warm to it. I think it's because I don't find the plot very believable. Would you really risk your own marriage and the love of your husband just to protect him from heartbreak over the realities of his eldest son? Would you really take the blame knowing that it might cost you your marriage and threaten the future of your own child? And if you feared that a quiver of arrows might be used to harm your child surely you would remove them, not leave them hanging on the wall? And is it fair to send a disabled young boy, despite his wrongdoings, away to sea for a year?



So many questions and not enough satisfactory answers for my liking I'm afraid. Which is a shame really as the general premise of the story is a good one. Mr Ferguson comes to see Holmes for help in clearing up a very unpleasant incident in his household. He had married a beautiful, spirited South American woman and had no doubt over her love and devotion for him. They had a baby together but he also had a son from a previous marriage who had a spinal condition. He had witnessed his wife beating this youth on two occasions and then found her crouched over the baby with blood around her mouth and a wound on the child's neck. She fled to her bedroom and hadn't seen him since.

Holmes managed to deduce from the weapons on the wall and a curiously disabled dog that a poisoned arrow had been shot into the child's neck by the jealous eldest boy. The wife, who was anticipating such an attack, was trying to suck the poison out. She hid the truth from her husband as she didn't want to break his heart over the son whom he loved so much.

Like I say at the start, there is so much about this that doesn't quite hold true that it detracts from the story for me. However, it is still a good tale at its heart and I did enjoy re-reading it.

It is also the story in which Holmes says the line – 'I never get your limits Watson. There are unexplored possibilities about you', upon hearing of Watson's earlier prowess on the rugby field. I have used this idea to great effect in my own novel and tried to explore some of those previously unexplored possibilities.

There is also another expression which seemed more like something my Nan would say rather than a wealthy gentleman, a bit like the 'I'll just put my slippers on' line in *The Blue Carbuncle*. Mr Ferguson says – 'And yet the kiddies have got to be protected.' Kiddies? I can hear my mum's voice in my head saying "Kids are baby goats not human children!" – her usual phrase of chastisement if I ever said 'kid' instead of child.

All in all a bit of a disappointing story but still gives the usual enjoyment of watching Holmes save the day.

**6 out of 10.**

**Charlotte Anne Walters**

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