



An Inquiry into:
“The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger”

Vol. XII No. 39 • May 27, 2021

“The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger” was first published in *Liberty Magazine* on January 22, 1927. It was published in *The Strand Magazine*, on February 1927. It is part of *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*.

By an overwhelming majority our Canon chronologists

state that this case took place in 1896. That being so, then at the time Sherlock Holmes was 42 years old and Doctor John H. Watson 44.

Main Characters:

Eugenia Ronder, former circus performer. Mr. Ronder, Eugenia’s late husband, a circus showman. Leonardo, circus strongman, Eugenia’s dead lover. Mrs. Merrilow, Eugenia’s landlady, who goes to Holmes on her behalf.

Notable Quotes:

When one considers that Mr. Sherlock Holmes was in active practice for twenty-three years, and that during seventeen of these I was allowed to cooperate with him and to keep notes of his doings, it will be clear that I have a mass of material at my command. The problem has always been not to find but to choose. There is the long row of year-books which fill a shelf, and there

are the dispatch-cases filled with documents, a perfect quarry for the student not only of crime but of the social and official scandals of the late Victorian era. Concerning these latter, I may say that the writers of agonized letters, who beg that the honour of their families or the reputation of famous forebears may not be touched, have nothing to fear. The discretion and high sense of professional honour which have always distinguished my friend are still at work in the choice of these memoirs, and no confidence will be abused. I deprecate, however, in the strongest way the attempts which have been made lately to get at and to destroy these papers. The source of these outrages is known, and if they are repeated I have Mr. Holmes’s authority for saying that the whole story concerning the

<i>The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger</i>	
<i>Chronologist</i>	<i>Date of the Adventure</i>
<i>Canon</i>	<i>Late 1896</i>
<i>Baring-Gould</i>	<i>October 1896</i>
<i>Bell</i>	<i>Autumn 1896</i>
<i>Blakeney</i>	<i>Winter 1896</i>
<i>Brend</i>	<i>Early November 1896</i>
<i>Christ</i>	<i>Autumn 1890</i>
<i>Dakin</i>	<i>October(?) 1896</i>
<i>Folsom</i>	<i>September 1902</i>
<i>Hall</i>	<i>Early 1896</i>
<i>Keefauver</i>	<i>Tuesday, September 22, 1896</i>
<i>Klinger</i>	<i>1896</i>
<i>Zeisler</i>	<i>October 1896</i>

Please note that Canon chronologists may differ on pivotal dates and comparative periods between cases, thus a simple majority is not necessarily correct. Most Canon scholars settle on a single chronologist’s results for their research framework.

politician, the lighthouse, and the trained cormorant will be given to the public. There is at least one reader who will understand.

“The ways of fate are indeed hard to understand. If there is not some compensation hereafter, then the world is a cruel jest.”

“Your life is not your own. Keep your hands off it.”

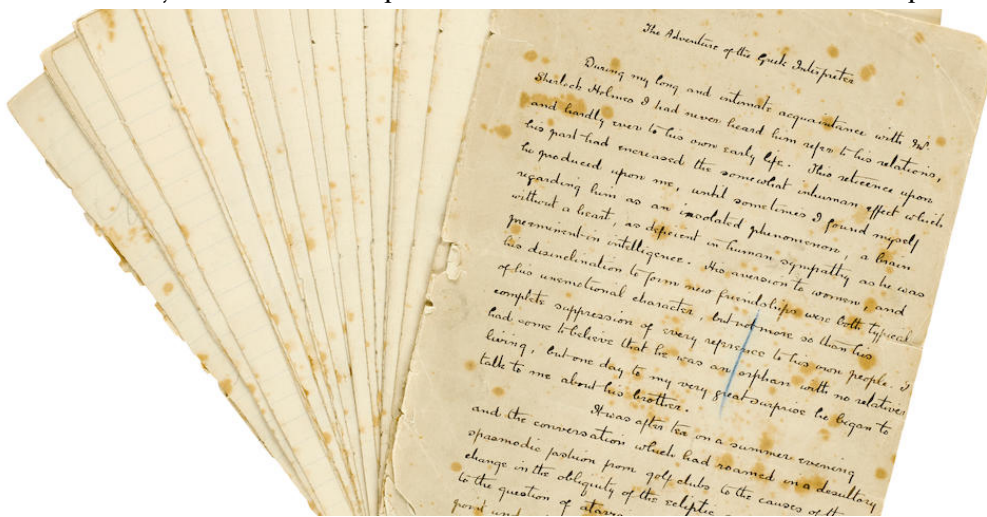
“The example of patient suffering is in itself the most precious of all lessons to an impatient world.”

The Mysterious Papers

Canon scholars have estimated—and it appears to be more a matter of opinion, than of fact—that there are 140 or so unpublished cases that Sherlock Holmes investigated and, presumably, solved. There has been and is much controversy regarding why these adventures of the Great Detective have remained unpublished. At times, Watson has hinted there have been some cases which his friend was not able to solve, or which would have been of little interest had he had published them; others, were they to have been published, would have hurt innocent participants, whether by reopening old

wounds or unnecessarily destroying reputations.

However, it is quite apparent, from Watson’s threat (sanctioned by Holmes) that there were others that had they become known, would very likely have had a deleterious effect to governments (both foreign and domestic) and perhaps even harm the Crown itself. Certainly, nothing that he would have been willing to see the light of day.



These records must have held truly disastrous information for some very influential people moving in the highest levels of government and finance; otherwise there would have been no attempts—plural—to destroy them. How potentially damaging might have these papers have been? We get a hint of this by Watson’s revelation that there were attempts to destroy, not obtain, this material. Too hot to handle, it would seem.

It is also interesting to learn that these potentially explosive papers were kept by the Great Detective under Watson’s stewardship. He did not destroy them himself; neither did he turn them over to the government for safekeeping. One might posit that perhaps



our sleuth kept them as personal insurance for himself as well as Watson. It is not unusual for a keeper of great secrets to be permanently silenced by those affected by those secrets, particularly if those facts hold the promise of long life and potential damage to innocents.

One has but to recall at the end of the Second World War Winston Churchill's efforts to stop the release of secret German documents revealing Nazi plans to install the very thoughtless Duke of Windsor as King, once they had conquered England.

In view of all this, it is not too farfetched to wonder whether the loss of a certain "large tin box" was not a successful government effort to ensure that these records never become public.

Eugenia Ronder's Objective

In some ways, Eugenia Ronder resembles Josiah Amberley, the retired colourman. In both cases, their reasons for bringing Holmes into her lives remain somewhat nebulous.

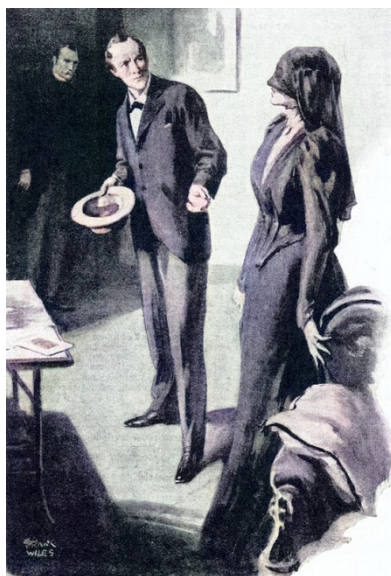


It is difficult to find, throughout the entire Canon, a more tragic and pitiable person than Eugenia. Raised within the limited horizons of a circus, doubtless with a minimum amount of education, she enters into a nightmare of a marriage with a monster who mercilessly abuses her to the point at which she decides to murder him. To make things worse, she falls into the arms of a lover who abandons her in her time of need to be mauled and disfigured by a lion, leaving her to be tortured by the memory of her beauty every time she faces the horror in her looking glass.

For years the poor wretch secluded herself in a small set of rooms to escape from the world. Over the time that passed since the attack by the lion, she had huge amounts of time to ponder her life. The result appears to have been her decision, in view of the fact that she

thought she did not have long to live, if not to clear her conscience, to at least reveal the facts of what had happened.

Through her reading—possibly *The Strand Magazine*—she learned of the existence of Sherlock Holmes and, not illogically, reasoned that this



would be the best person with whom to share her burdens. But why go this route? She could easily have set down all the facts in writing, sealed the document, and entrusted it to an attorney with instructions that it be forwarded to the proper authorities upon her death. Why would she have run this risk? Certainly, as Holmes had warned her before she told him her story, if he had thought that he had to go to the authorities, she would have been exposed to heartless publicity; surely the last thing she would have desired.



Why would she have run this risk? Certainly, as Holmes had warned her before she told him her story, if he had thought that he had to go to the authorities, she would have been exposed to heartless publicity; surely the last thing she would have desired.

There can be, however, little doubt of her strong decision to have the facts come to light. She told her story even though Holmes warned her before she began that he might find it necessary to go to the authorities based upon what he learned from her.

This case shines not because through a set of impeccable deductions a vicious criminal was caught, but rather because Sherlock Holmes reveals a profound sensitivity and compassion that those who not well-acquainted with him would not even suspect. He truly comes across as the exceptional Victorian gentleman that he is, *sans peur et sans reproche*. We witness him giving hope to the hopeless, warning Eugenia that her life is not her own to take. When she reveals her face as proof of how pointless her life has become, he consoles her: "How can you tell? The example of patient suffering is in itself the most precious of all lessons to an impatient world." Then, as Watson tells us:

Two days later, when I called upon my friend, he pointed with some pride to a small blue bottle upon his mantelpiece. I picked it up. There was a red poison label. A pleasant almond odour rose when I opened it.

"Prussic acid?" said I.

"Exactly. It came by post. 'I send you my temptation. I will follow your advice.' That was the message. I think, Watson, we can guess the name of the brave woman who sent it."

Nicely done, Mr. Holmes, nicely done!

What else happened in 1896:

Empire

Jameson Raid failure in South Africa provokes crisis; British negotiations with Boers (to 1899) fail.

Matabele Revolt suppressed (1896-97).

Protectorate established in Sierra Leone and East Africa.

Kaiser Wilhelm's telegram to Kruger, congratulating him on the defeat of the Jameson Raid.

Conquest of the Sudan begins with the start of Kitchener's campaign against the Madhi (1896-99).

Anglo-French treaty settles boundaries in Siam.

Sudanese railway extended to Wadi Haifa.

Widespread famine in India, to 1897.

Britain

Hotel Cecil, the Strand, built.

National Portrait Gallery moves to present site in Trafalgar Square.

Beginning of period of rising prices and falling wages (until 1914).

Conciliation Act: boards can settle industrial disputes if both sides are willing.

First all-steel English building erected at West Hartlepool.

Royal Victorian Order founded as Personal Order of Sovereign.

World

First modern Olympic Games are held at Athens.

Klondike Gold Rush in Canada.

France annexes Madagascar.

Van Houten's Franchise Bill extends the Dutch franchise.

French Tunisian protectorate recognized by Italy.

Italians are defeated by Menelek of Abyssinia at Battle of Adwa, resulting in Treaty of Addis-Ababa.

Massacre of Armenians by Kurds and Circassians supported by the Sultan.

Insurrection in Crete against Turkish rule.

Foundation of Russo-Chinese Bank.

Cassini Treaty: China gives Russia the right to build a railway through Manchuria to Port Arthur.

Russian newspapers granted temporary licenses; imported books and newspapers strictly censored.

First public film exhibition, in U.S.

Art

Gilbert and Sullivan debut *The Grand Duke*.

Giacomo Puccini débuts *La Bohème* at Turin.

Toulouse-Lautrec paints *Maxime Dethomas*.

Wells publishes *Island of Dr. Moreau*.

R. Strauss debuts *Also Sprach Zarathustra*.

Science and Technology

Nobel Prizes started, for physics, physiology or medicine, chemistry, literature, furtherance of the cause of peace.

Guglielmo Marconi demonstrates on Salisbury Plain the practicability of wireless telegraphy.

Samuel Langley (U.S.A.) successfully flies a steam-driven model aircraft.

Rehn, of Frankfort, sutures a heart wound; beginning of heart surgery.

J.J. Thompson identifies the electron, though not by name.

Emile Achard first describes paratyphoid fever.

Antoine Henri Becquerel, observes radiation from uranium affects photographic plates; discovery of radioactivity.

Zeeman observes that light emitted by a substance placed in a magnetic field undergoes changes.

Earliest record of water chlorination, during typhoid outbreak in Italy.

Next week's case: SHOS

Respectfully submitted,

Murray, the Courageous Orderly

(a.k.a. Alexander E. Braun)

"I should have fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly..."

If you would like to join the Hounds of the Internet, email us at CourageousMurray@aol.com.