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Bootprints (editors) are Mark and JoAnn Alberstat, 46 Kingston Crescent, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3A 2M2, Canada, to whom letters and editorial submissions should be addressed. E-mail: markalberstat@gmail.com and on Twitter at @CanadianHolmes

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Canadian Holmes

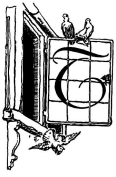
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One-hundred sixty second issue

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Graces of Bootprints

I hear of viruses everywhere...

As the coronavirus COVID-19 spread around the world and people were asked to self-isolate I thought what better time than to reread some favourite Sherlockian stories. Some Sherlockians make a point of rereading the Canon once a year, some only read the stories when preparing for a local meeting. Now is the time for a refresher.

While thinking over the Canon one cannot help but link it to the latest pandemic. Watson, of course, suffered from enteric fever, which we know as typhoid. He contracted it in Peshawar, where he was recuperating after the Battle of Maiwand.

We must also not overlook Culverton Smith of 13 Lower Burke Street. Holmes calls him the one “man upon earth who is best versed in this disease” that Holmes is pretending to have. Some other diseases mentioned in this story are: Tapanuli fever, black Formosa corruption and the Coolie disease from Sumatra, all of which, despite wonderful names are fictitious and only found in Conan Doyle’s imagination. One disease that is only too real and mentioned in the Canon is leprosy, which features importantly in “The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier.”

Stay well, wash your hands and read Sherlock Holmes. While you are doing that enjoy this issue, which kicks off with Barbara Rusch’s Bow Window column, followed by Charles Prepolec’s first part of a two-part article on Professor Challenger. Ian Bennett of the Cesspudlians takes us on a walking tour of London, thanks to Google and “The Greek Interpreter.” This is followed by a three-page feature on Sherlockian statues from around the world. If your membership level allows you to look at the online version of Canadian Holmes, this feature is worth taking a look as the online version is in colour. The pictorial is followed by two Hound-related articles. The first is by Monica Schmidt, as she looks at Beryl Stapleton, and that is followed by Daniel L. Friedman’s and Eugene B. Friedman’s thoughts on the origins of the story. Angela Misri’s Portia Adams will be back on the bookstore shelves and we have a sneak peak at her latest. Dan Andriacco gives us a toast, Conan Doyle tells us about his skiing adventures, we have some book reviews, Barbara Rusch is under the microscope in Strictly Personal, and the issue rounds out with Diary Notes.

The view from the bow window

Barbara Rusch explores various aspects of Victorian and Edwardian life as they relate to the canonical tales. Bow Window illustration by Laurie Fraser Manifold.



Throughout history, famous jewels have taken on a sheen of notoriety. Frequently stolen and often reputed to be cursed, they are an endless source of fascination, mystery and intrigue, not to mention misfortune and misery. Perhaps the most famous is the Koh-i-Noor diamond. Weighing in at just over 186 carats, it is one of the largest in the world. Originally mined in India, its name means “mountain of light” in Hindi. The priceless stone exchanged hands through Hindu, Mongolian, Persian, Afghan and Sikh dynasties, all of whom fought bloody battles for possession of it. According to Hindu folklore, “He who owns this diamond will own the world, but will also know all its misfortunes. Only God or woman can wear it with impunity.” And indeed, every king who ever wore it has lost his throne. First brought to England in 1850 for Queen Victoria, today it sits in the crown of Queen Elizabeth II, who, being a woman, is presumably safe from its curse.

The Hope Diamond was reputed to have been stolen from a Hindu idol. It was first purchased by a French merchant named Tavernier, a name (perhaps not coincidentally) familiar to Holmes aficionados as the modeller of the wax effigy that serves as a decoy in the bow window of 221B in “The Mazarin Stone.” Those to whom the stone brought disaster include Marie Antoinette, who was beheaded, Princess de Lamballe, who was beaten to death by an angry mob, Jacques Colet, who died by his own hand, Surbaya, stabbed to death by her lover, and Simon Monharides, whose life ended in a carriage crash along with his entire family. In the 20th century, Mrs. Evalyn McLean thought she could beat the curse. Sadly, her son was killed in a car crash, her daughter died of an overdose, and her husband left her for another woman. Its curse is also a monetary one, as those who owned it, including the heirs of King George IV and Henry Philip Hope, after whom it was named, were forced to sell it to pay off debts.

Not surprisingly, cursed and stolen jewels feature in several of the Canonical tales, including “The Blue Carbuncle,” “The Mazarin Stone,” The Agra Treasure in *The Sign of the Four*, “The Beryl Coronet,” the

crown of Charles I of “The Musgrave Ritual,” and the Black Pearl of the Borgias in “The Six Napoleons.”

Like their real-life counterparts, the sparkly stones of the Canon share a dark and sinister past, along with a propensity for the tragedy they bring to those through whose hands they pass. In an introspective contemplation of the Blue Carbuncle, Sherlock Holmes offers his observations on the formidable power of blingy baubles — blood diamonds in particular:

Holmes took up the stone and held it against the light. “It’s a bonny thing,” said he. “Just see how it glints and sparkles. Of course it is a nucleus and focus of crime. Every good stone is. They are the devil’s pet baits. In the larger and older jewels every facet may stand for a bloody deed ... In spite of its youth, it has already a sinister history. There have been two murders, a vitriol-throwing, a suicide, and several robberies brought about for the sake of this forty-grain weight of crystallised charcoal. Who would think that so pretty a toy would be a purveyor to the gallows and the prison?”

Though not nearly as valuable as the Koh-i-Noor, yet equally precious to me, is a bracelet in my collection that was a gift to Queen Victoria. The band is fashioned of woven hair, the gold locket inscribed with her daughter Beatrice’s cypher, a B and a B backwards, surmounted by a crown, opening to reveal a watercolour self-portrait of “Baby,” as her mother fondly referred to her. Inscribed on the inside is the dedication, “To dearest Mama in recollection of 8 Jan. 1874,” the date of the princess’s confirmation. I am as proud to clasp it on my wrist as Holmes must have been to fasten the emerald onto his tie.



SUNDAY MAGAZINE Of the Buffalo Courier

PART 3

BUFFALO, N. Y.

MARCH 24, 1912

20 PAGES



Yours truly (to use the conventional lie) George Edward Challenger.

Beginning Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's
New Serial, THE LOST WORLD

Enter the Lost World of Professor George Edward Challenger - Part 1 of 2

By Charles Prepolec

Charles Prepolec, M.Bt., BSI (“The Man with the Twisted Lip”) is a Calgary, AB Sherlockian, former mystery specialty bookshop owner, collector and freelance editor. His most recent fiction anthologies include Gaslight Gothic: Strange Tales of Sherlock Holmes (2018 EDGE) and Professor Challenger: New Worlds and Lost Places (2015 EDGE).

“I was prepared for something strange, but not for so overpowering a personality as this. It was his size which took one’s breath away—his size and his imposing presence. His head was enormous, the largest I have ever seen upon a human being. I am sure that his top-hat, had I ever ventured to don it, would have slipped over me entirely and rested on my shoulders. He had the face and beard which I associate with an Assyrian bull; the former florid, the latter so black as almost to have a suspicion of blue, spade-shaped and rippling down over his chest. The hair was peculiar, plastered down in front in a long, curving wisp over his massive forehead. The eyes were blue-gray under great black tufts, very clear, very critical, and very masterful. A huge spread of shoulders and a chest like a barrel were the other parts of him which appeared above the table, save for two enormous hands covered with long black hair. This and a bellowing, roaring, rumbling voice made up my first impression of the notorious Professor Challenger.”

– *The Lost World*



o wrote the narrator, young journalist Edward D. Malone, on first setting eyes upon the figure of the irascible Professor George Edward Challenger – hero of Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Lost World*. It’s quite the description but then again Challenger is quite the character. Although he appears in only five stories (*The Lost World*, *The Poison Belt*, *The Land of Mist*, *When the World Screamed* and *The Disintegration Machine*), he is in every way as eccentric and iconic a character as Conan Doyle’s more

famous creation, Sherlock Holmes. While Challenger's impact on science fiction isn't on quite the same level as that of Holmes's on detective fiction, *The Lost World* certainly gave rise to a whole sub-genre within the then fledgling field and inspired a whole slew of imitators, including Edgar Rice Burroughs and, more recently, Michael Crichton and his *Jurassic Park* stories. The 1925 landmark silent stop-motion film version of *The Lost World* with Wallace Beery as Challenger led directly into the making of *King Kong*. *The Lost World* then became an Irwin Allen flick in the 1960s with Claude Rains. This was followed by two early 1990s low-budget Harry Alan Towers films with John Rhys Davies in the lead, a number of direct to video films of dubious quality, three seasons of a cheesy television series with a bikini clad vixen, and a prestige BBC miniseries in 2001 with Bob Hoskins. Not to be overlooked, of course, is Spielberg's derivative *Jurassic Park* films. It's really a pity that the character isn't as well known as Holmes today; doubly so since *The Lost World* is probably Arthur Conan Doyle's best and most engaging novel. Given it begins with a young Malone setting off to prove himself a manly sort to his beloved Gladys, it has a coming-of-age feel that seems to suggest Conan Doyle was perhaps inspired every bit as much by R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* as the works of H. Rider Haggard, Verne or Wells.

"My ambition is to do for the boys' book what Sherlock Holmes did for the detective tale. I don't suppose I could bring off two such coups. And yet I hope it may."

Of course, Conan Doyle also noted, with the sort of frustration only an author doomed to constant requests to repeat an early triumph can feel, in an interview shortly before his death, Holmes overshadowed everything:

"To tell the truth, I am rather tired of hearing myself described as the author of Sherlock Holmes. Why not, for a change, the author of Rodney Stone, or The White Company, or of The Lost World? One would think I had written nothing but detective stories."

In any case, while you certainly wouldn't think so from Malone's description of Challenger, the professor and the detective share several similar traits. Both are seekers after truth, both use a scientific method in their approach to life's mysteries, and neither one gives a damn about what lesser mortals may think of them along the way, although Challenger makes no bones about telling you, loudly and emphatically, how little he cares for the uninformed opinion of critics. On one hand he is a wild and woolly egotistical fellow with an 'in your face' approach to whatever

obstacles may bar his way and a pathological dislike of journalists so strong that he often finds himself in front of a magistrate for physically hurling them from his path, or as on one occasion, when fearing a rival's scientific discovery of a disintegrator ray may be put to nefarious purposes he doesn't hesitate for a second before turning the man's invention upon him and dispersing the fellow's atoms into the ether. On the other hand, he is a tender and loving husband who coos and fusses over his diminutive and devoted wife Jessie, and later extends the same warmth to his daughter Enid. In short, unlike Holmes, he is a man of strong feelings and convictions. He's also a scientific crusader and explorer, a creative thinker, determined to prove his often-outlandish theories in the face of derisive snorts from a largely skeptical world. And oh, what theories they were!

When we first meet Challenger in *The Lost World* he is preparing an expedition to prove the existence of still living dinosaurs cocooned from the world at large on a remote South American plateau. A year later he predicts a global cataclysm will befall mankind as the Earth drifts through a cloud of ether in *The Poison Belt*. In the surprisingly eco-friendly *When the World Screamed* we find Challenger at Hengist Down drilling deep into the Earth's mantle to make contact with a giant sentient Echidna, and he quickly learns not to poke sleeping giants. In *The Disintegration Machine* Challenger is called upon to inspect the workings of Theodore Nemor's disintegration machine — essentially an early transporter ala Star Trek — and manages to send the inventor to his doom before he can sell his findings to the Russians. Then there is *The Land of Mist* in which Challenger finds himself delving into the world of Spiritualism. Five stories, and five stories only, but each, with the exception of *The Land of Mist*, deals with great genre-changing science fiction and fantasy themes that have been worked and reworked ever since.

The influence of Conan Doyle's genius can be found in a variety of media. There's a bit of Challenger in everything from Nigel Kneale's Quatermass right through to the likes of the X-Files and Doctor Who, so I think it's high time the original Challenger crept out from behind the shadow of that detective fellow and was reintroduced to the world at large. If you've not read a Challenger story before, do yourself a favour and let ACD take you on a journey of discovery to *The Lost World* ... then come back next time as we take a look at collecting the exploits of Professor George Edward Challenger in all his myriad forms.

Editor's Note: A version of this article was first published as the introduction to Professor Challenger: New Worlds, Lost Places edited by J.R. Campbell and Charles Prepolec, Edge, 2015.

Walking in the footsteps of Holmes

By Ian Bennett

Ian Bennett is a retired school principal and international man of leisure. He is a Cesspudlian and Bootmaker and drives his family mad with his constant references to Holmes. He is currently working on a book of "Canon" crosswords.



While reading (again) “The Greek Interpreter,” I was struck suddenly by the walk Watson and Holmes take on their way to see Mycroft. This story has always been a favourite of mine, since it introduces us to the singular character of Mycroft as well as providing some scant details of the Holmes family. We never get very much of the “backstory” of Sherlock Holmes but “The Greek Interpreter” gives us at least a brief peek behind the curtain, as well as Holmes’s views on the “nature vs. nurture” question. As an educator of 30 years, I’ve pondered that one myself a fair bit and it is good to have Holmes’s thoughts on the subject.

This time, however, my reading gave me pause to look again at the journey Holmes and Watson take to meet Sherlock’s elder brother.

“...if you care for a stroll this beautiful evening I shall be very happy to introduce you to two curiosities.”

Off they go on their brief jaunt to catch Mycroft in his lair at the Diogenes club and I wonder how pleasant would it be to go along with them? Five minutes later they are strolling along Baker Street on the way to Regent Circus. They walk down to Pall Mall and enter it from the St. James’s end. A short distance from the Carlton Club, they reach their final destination and our introduction to Mycroft is ready to occur.

The walk is a short one and we have the happy opportunity to follow it along from Baker Street to Pall Mall through the easily available Google Maps. Unhappily, we can’t compare the walking journey with the filmed journey in the Granada Television series since in that episode, perhaps to keep costs down and speed along the plot, the journey is undertaken in aansom cab.

If you want to follow in their footsteps, point your internet browser (Chrome preferred) to <http://maps.google.com> and you can easily locate

221B Baker Street in London, UK and The Carlton Club on St. James as well. Search for the Carlton Club and then look up at the top left corner of the screen and click “Directions” where you can enter “221B Baker Street, UK” and don’t forget to click the icon to indicate you will be walking on foot. Sadly, there is no option for making the trip by hansom!

The shortest route is just 2.7 km, or 1.7 miles, and will take about 36 minutes to complete, unless you stop to admire the sights. Drop the little peg man (he lives in the bottom right corner of your map) at Baker Street for a street view and follow the arrows on the road along until you reach the corner at Oxford Street. You could stop in and buy a nice watch at Omega or TAG Heuer, or if your purse won’t extend that far, Marks and Spencer is on the opposite corner. You just need to stroll down Baker Street and continue past Portman Square on your right. Stop and admire the view in full 360°. Pass Selfridges (try not to get distracted) and then turn left at Oxford Street. Watson and Holmes have no such problem; Selfridges won’t be open until 1908 and “The Greek Interpreter” is probably in the late 1880s. Zeisler says 1888 and Baring-Gould concurs. Gavin Brend says 1882; no matter, no Selfridges in any case. Nothing to eat here.



Down Oxford Street we continue, past the underground station at Bond Street up to New Bond Street, then turn right. Look up as you walk along and admire the same architecture Watson and Holmes would have passed. All of it is available to see on Google Maps and, of course, you can rotate the view for a full 360° look. They are wonderful to see and will help you catch that Victorian feeling on your virtual journey. Only the sound of clopping hooves is missing and maybe the smell of Victorian London, which might be better to miss entirely.

Keep going past Sotheby’s, past Hermes, on by Gucci and Tiffany and Co. Keep going across Piccadilly then make a little right hand jog down to the next street and you’ll be on St. James and three blocks down you’ll



pass the Carlton Club on your right - but this is not your final destination. The Carlton Club of 1888 was at 100 Pall Mall so you must continue down the street until you reach

New Bond Street looking toward Pall Mall (Google Maps)

Pall Mall and then turn left and keep going until you reach that address. It's clearly a new building but look around and you'll see the signs of Victorian London still visible in the surrounding properties. The original building that housed the Carlton Club was destroyed by bombs during 1940. It's here you'll have to do a little sleuthing on your own, for no sign will proclaim the Diogenes Club, so pull out your magnifying glass and have a look around and perhaps you'll spot it. Perhaps it too was destroyed during the war and never reestablished. What did "unclubbable men" do then? Don't worry, have a look around and see what pops up of interest. Perhaps the building did survive, and you may find it yet.

We'll never know if this is the route Holmes and Watson took that day to meet Mycroft and Mr. Melas. Watson describes entering Pall Mall from the St. James end, and possibly they walked back to Baker Street the same way, though I like to think they might have taken a more congenial and quiet walk by passing back down Marlborough Road to the Mall, then strolled up to Buckingham Palace to see who might be home. Happily we can join them on this imaginary journey as well. Just pass by Canada Gate then go along Constitution Hill through Green Park. Cross the road at Hyde Park Corner and walk through scenic Hyde Park, up to Speakers Corner, stopping every now and then to look around at the 360° view in the magnificent park. No street noise or bad smells here, just green park and perhaps fresh cut grass. It will take us almost all the way back until we cut along to Baker Street on the right for the last few minutes. A pleasant stroll in the possible footsteps of Holmes and Watson, through the park on the way home which we can also enjoy — courtesy of Google Maps. Unfortunately, we can't eavesdrop on their conversation and perhaps find out more of the Holmes family history. For that we will need an as yet uninvented Google product. Just be patient.



The Former Diogenes Club? (Google Maps)

A world of statues



Left – an ice sculpture of Holmes in the town of Zwolle in the Netherlands during a 2019 festival. Photo by Wishwas Abhyankar. Right – Holmes and Watson in Yekaterinburg, Russia. Photo by Alexander Sedov



Left – one of your faithful editors with Holmes in Edinburgh. Right – Holmes outside of the Baker Street underground station in London.

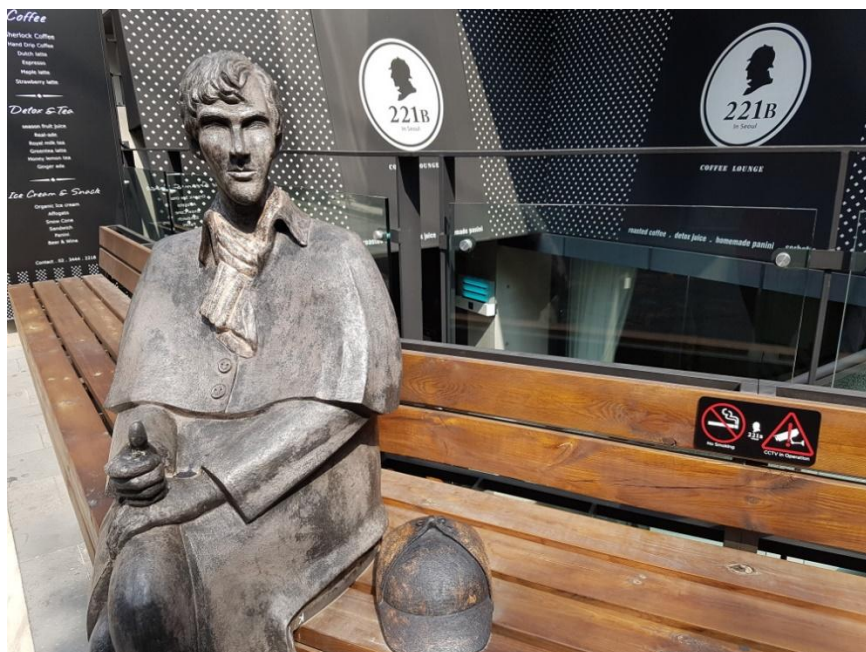


Toronto's own Peggy Perdue with a pensive Holmes in Meiringen, Switzerland.

Another Russian statue, this one in Moscow with American Sherlockian, Howard Ostrom, enjoying some time with two friends.



Portsmouth-photo by Paul Thomas Miller.



Holmes is truly a worldwide phenomenon, proven, to some extent by this statue in Seoul, South Korea.



Based in London but covering the entire UK, The Living Statue company provides human statues for events in Great Britain, Europe and beyond. Included in their portfolio is, of course, Sherlock Holmes.

Caught in the Middle: Beryl Stapleton – Victim or Villain?

By Monica Schmidt

Monica M. Schmidt, BSI, ASH, a licensed mental health counsellor practising in Iowa City, Iowa is the president of the Younger Stamfords of Iowa City. In addition to being a member of many other Sherlockian organizations, she is often found travelling the country presenting papers concerning mental health as it relates to Sherlockiana.



any of the minor characters in Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories are written so multidimensionally that one could spend a lifetime debating the finer points of the characters' intentions, motivations and end-game goals.

The male characters in the stories tend to get most of the attention as scholars analyze the minutiae in the mysteries but one of the more fascinating characters is Beryl Stapleton in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. When examining her actions throughout the narrative, there is enough ambiguity for one to make a reasonable argument as to whether she is a villain—an accomplice—of her “brother” Jack (who is really her husband) or truly a victim of her circumstances with minimal culpability in the plot to murder the Baskervilles. I argue that Miss Beryl Stapleton is a victim and not a dastardly villain like her brother/husband.

The first mention of Beryl Stapleton is by Dr. Mortimer as he is giving Watson a rundown on the suspects in our mystery. He refers to Beryl as the attractive sister of Jack Stapleton, the naturalist, rather than his wife. As the Stapletons have lived on the moor for some time, and no one knows the true nature of their relationship, it indicates that there was a long premeditation to Jack's plan of bumping off those who block his way to the Baskerville title, property and fortune. The fact that Beryl cooperates with and participates in this long-term ruse may seem like the actions of an accomplice, but there is no way to know for sure whether Beryl was willingly engaged until we look at how her actions fit with the overall story arc.

The first time readers see Beryl is as Watson is taking a stroll on the moor and is approached by Jack Stapleton, who seeks an introduction. The two men chat briefly as Stapleton gives Watson an expositional rundown on the dangers of the moor and the Great Grimpen Mire. As Mr. Stapleton leaves the conversation mid-sentence to chase down a butterfly, Miss



Illustration by Sidney Paget, The Strand Magazine November 1901

Stapleton seizes the moment of privacy to speak to Watson, whom she mistakes for Sir Henry Baskerville. “Go back! she tells Watson. Go straight back to London, instantly.” She adds: “I cannot explain. [...] But for God’s sake do what I ask you. Go back and never set foot upon the moor again.” Watson notes that her warning was delivered with “such intense earnestness that I could not doubt that some grave and deep reason lay behind it.” Beryl’s words are certainly not those of an accomplice who is willing to kill someone to clear the way to an estate and fortune.

One could make the argument that warning off and chasing Sir Henry back to London, or Canada, vacates

Baskerville Hall and, therefore, the Stapletons could potentially claim the property as their own. But doing this would make Jack no closer to the Baskerville fortune, since Sir Henry must die before Jack can claim it. If Beryl is truly a willing accomplice in Jack’s plan, her actions make no sense because they undermine the endgame.

Countering the earnestness in her warning message is an observation by Watson. He sees Beryl’s response to Jack’s mention about their relocation from the North Country with an utter lack of conviction in her words when she says she is “quite happy” with their life together on the moor. An argument could be made that Beryl was a great actress and using mixed messages and reverse psychology as a means of making Watson, whom she mistook for Sir Henry, to eventually become the victim of Jack’s assassination plot, but this argument is absurd. The more logical argument leans toward her being unhappy with both the move and being an unwilling/forced accomplice to Jack’s murderous plot, which is why she attempts to undermine and thwart it at the first opportune moment by warning Sir Henry (Watson).

Of course, when Beryl becomes aware of her misidentification of Watson as Sir Henry, she asks Watson to forget what she has said, since the message was not intended for him. When Watson questions her about the inconsistency of her words, the motivation for him to forget her warning, and why her brother would be upset if he knew what she said, she deflects by responding, “A woman’s whim, Dr. Watson. When you know me better you will understand that I cannot always give reasons for what I say or do”; “You make too much of it, Dr. Watson”; and “He would be very angry if he knew that I have said anything which might induce Sir Henry to go away,” while simultaneously sharing her fear about the all-too-real killer hound. The mixed messages, combined with the desire to cover up a mistake, also lend themselves to the argument that she is an unwilling and fearful accomplice. Why else would she try to downplay her statements while at the same time giving a warning about the danger of the blood-thirsty predator on the moor?

When Beryl finally meets the real Sir Henry, they hit it off tremendously and begin to keep each other’s company. And yet, Jack Stapleton, as her brother, appears to disapprove of the match between the two. Sir Henry and Beryl spend a lot of time together—as Jack acts the part of the jealous and overly protective brother—while the romantic entanglement deepens. If Beryl’s flirtation with and seduction of Sir Henry were part of Jack’s plan to keep Sir Henry on the moor, one would assume that Jack would be pleased with the infatuation between the two. If it were all part of the plan, it would make sense for Beryl to pretend to fall in love with Henry in order to keep him at Baskerville Hall so he could eventually fall victim to the deadly hound. And yet, Watson observes that he “...more than once caught a look of the strongest disapprobation in [Jack’s] face when Sir Henry has been paying some attention to his sister.” To what end? The jealous, disapproving brother routine ultimately undermines his plan to keep Henry engaged and occupied with his sister/wife.

Additionally, Jack refuses to give the new lovebirds any opportunity for privacy and essentially throws temper tantrums when she and Henry seek to be alone. “The naturalist’s angry gestures showed that the lady was included in his displeasure,” says Watson. One could argue Jack was keeping up appearances and protecting the reputation of his sister. But the stronger view is that his uncomfortable reaction indicates the courtship is definitely not part of the plan; otherwise Jack would be totally comfortable with and encouraging of the pairing. The fact that Jack later apologizes to Sir Henry for his rudeness supports the idea of his needing to more deeply commit to the cover story of Beryl being his sister and his everything. Therefore, one could conclude that Beryl is acting in opposition to and despite her marriage to Jack—meaning she is an unwilling accomplice to

the plan. And even though Jack tries to cover his actions with verbal apologies for his rudeness, his true feelings regarding his wife's emotional betrayal are evident.

Holmes is aware of the true nature of the relationship between the Stapletons—that they are not siblings but husband and wife. Watson is shocked and confused by this revelation. When Watson asks Holmes why there was such an elaborate deception, Holmes replies, “Because he [Jack] foresaw that she would be very much more useful to him in the character of a free woman.” Holmes implies that Jack is using and manipulating his wife for his own nefarious ends. While he says nothing about whether Beryl's involvement in the scheme was willing or not, there appears to be no implication that she is acting of her own volition. Watson deduces, based on this information, that the newspaper warning in London “must have come from her!” Again, if she were acting in tandem with her husband's plan, warning Sir Henry and driving him away does nothing to forward their goal of claiming the Baskerville estate. All signs continue to point to Beryl as being a forced accomplice in Jack Stapleton's plan.

In order to establish and solidify the credibility for their cover as siblings, Jack woos Laura Lyons—offering her a proposal of marriage (provided she divorce her husband) with which he had no intention of following through. Again, Beryl's action of going along with this plan could be argued either way—either she was comfortable with her husband's faux courting of another woman and breaking her heart in order to establish credibility, or she, as a helpless bystander, was forced to accept and go along with Jack's plan. But, in light of her other actions and Jack's unwillingness to allow her to mirror his actions (by engaging in a dalliance with Sir Henry) to strengthen their ruse, it is much more likely that she was an unwilling accomplice.

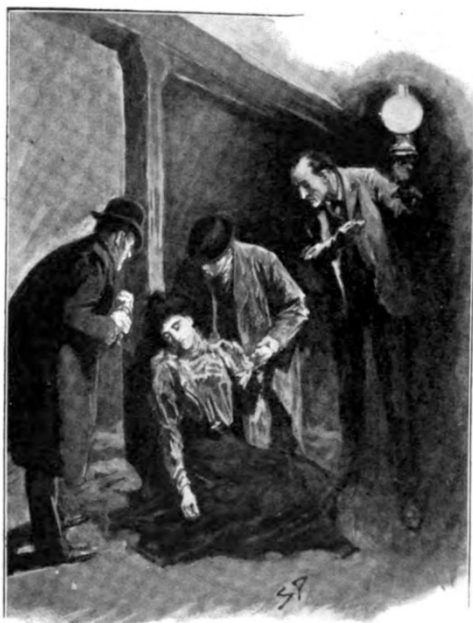


Illustration by Sidney Paget in The Strand Magazine April 1902

The most supportive argument that Beryl Stapleton was a victim appears in the climax of the story. The blood-thirsty hound is loosed upon Sir Henry as he returns home from a dinner at the Stapleton residence, Merripit House. Through bold action Holmes and Watson dispatch the killer beast, saving the life of the true Baskerville heir. Upon returning to Merripit House to continue the investigation, Holmes discovers Beryl Stapleton bound and gagged. If Beryl were a dastardly villain like her husband, there would have been no need to restrain and dispose of her. Once her gag is removed, her first thought was not about her husband, but about Sir Henry: "Is he safe?" she asks. "Has he escaped? [...] No, no, I did not mean my husband. Sir Henry? Is he safe?" A truly wicked partner-in-crime does not immediately consider the safety of the plot's intended victim. No, if Beryl were an equal partner in the plot to dispatch Sir Henry, she would have been able to disregard him as easily as Jack disregarded Laura Lyons. Instead, she inquires about Sir Henry's safety. While this inquiry could potentially be an extension of the elaborate ruse she and Jack were carrying out, it is much more likely that her concerns for Sir Henry are genuine.

As Holmes delivers the post-mortem on the mystery, he notes that "He [Rodger Baskerville/Jack Stapleton] married Beryl Garcia, one of the beauties of Costa Rica, and, having purloined a considerable sum of public money, he changed his name to Vandeleur and fled to England, where he established a school in the east of Yorkshire." In certain cultures, the family of someone who committed a crime might be punished for one of its member's crimes, even if they had nothing to do with it. Therefore, from early in their marriage, Rodger/Jack put Beryl in the precarious position of being an unfortunate captive, forced to follow and capitulate to him in all his schemes out of fear of potential reprisal.

Additionally, the day after the death of the hound, Beryl fully cooperates with the investigation. Watson observes, "It helped us to realize the horror of this woman's life when we saw the eagerness and joy with which she laid us on her husband's track." He assumes, correctly, that this woman was trapped by her marriage and, in order to remain alive and breathing, had little choice but to go along with whatever plot Jack Stapleton concocted.

So, can we say that Beryl Stapleton is a villain or a victim? She's a felon only if one were to argue from the perspective that she was willingly engaged in Rodger/Jack's plot to kill the Baskerville heirs. But if one examines the evidence, all signs point to the fact that she was manipulated and forced into her participation in the plot. That makes her more a victim than a villain in this complicated tale of ancient curses, assumed identities, deceit and murder.

Spectral hounds and dark alleys – the origins of the Baskervilles

By Daniel L. Friedman, M.D. & Eugene B. Friedman, M.D.

Dan and Gene Friedman are practicing pediatricians and the authors of The Strange Case of Dr. Doyle: A Journey into Madness and Mayhem.



he advent of the 20th century ushered in an exciting phase of Arthur Conan Doyle's life. Just 40 and at the peak of his fame, Doyle felt it was his obligation to participate in his nation's military campaign in the South African Boer War. He enlisted in the army and was sent to Bloemfontein, where he doubled as a physician and war correspondent.

When his tour of duty ended, Doyle sailed home aboard the same vessel that carried fellow war correspondent Bertram Fletcher Robinson. They quickly became friends, for not only were they both writers, but as avid sportsmen, they also shared common interests.

As soon as they disembarked, Robinson invited Doyle to join him for a golf holiday at the Royal Links Hotel in Norfolk. This friendship gave us *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in 1901.

While vacationing in France at the beginning of 1907, Fletcher Robinson unfortunately became a victim of typhoid fever, succumbing to his illness on January 21 at the age of 36. Soon after, a revised preface to *The Hound* appeared in Conan Doyle's *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*. It read, in part, as follows:

"Then came The Hound of the Baskervilles. It arose from a remark by that fine fellow whose premature death was a loss to the world, Fletcher Robinson, that there was a spectral dog near his home on Dartmoor. That remark was the inception of the book, but I should add that the plot and every word of the actual narrative was my own." (1)

Just why Doyle decided to alter the dedication which downplayed Robinson's contribution remains open to speculation. Perhaps Doyle's vanity may have been the impetus for this, or perhaps he was pressured by his publisher to omit any of Robinson's contribution in order to make the novel commercially successful.

Either way, was Doyle telling his readers the unvarnished truth in his revised dedication of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*? Were the details of the story Robinson's idea or had Doyle simply relied on his own childhood experiences in crafting this tale? The answer to these questions may lie in what happened to Doyle when he was quite young.

At the age of 10, he was enrolled in the Jesuit-run Stonyhurst College located in the Pennine Mountains of Lancashire. When he first arrived there, its main campus was undergoing some reconstruction. (2) When the new master of Baskerville Hall first arrived at the family estate, he also found a "a new building, half-constructed." The fictional Baskerville Hall and the factual Stonyhurst are massive structures embellished by noble twin towers and are adorned with impressive coats-of-arms and grand porches (Stonyhurst is described as having "an arched porch, of substantial and capacious proportions"). (3) There were "priests" and "masters" galleries at Stonyhurst, while Baskerville Hall had a "square balustraded gallery" of its own. The "heavy mullioned windows" are a striking feature of Baskerville Hall, as Stonyhurst is still graced by its "sharp-pointed five-light" (4) (mullioned) windows. For all intents and purposes, these two buildings are virtually identical to one another—right down to their modern-day billiard rooms. (5)

As a Stonyhurst student, Conan Doyle was obligated to go on "long walks" (6) through the surrounding countryside. During the course of a day (and more than 20 miles), his guides would do their best to scare the wits out of him and his classmates by spinning tales about the malevolent "sprite" known as the Skriker. (7) This Skriker holds the key to proving Doyle's assertion that he was the sole creator of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

Legend has it that once this particular creature decided to reveal itself, death became imminent for anyone who dared look upon him. Pennine tradition had it that the more visible the Skriker became, the closer to the grave the ill-fated observer became. Although it was thought that Skrikers could take on the appearance of cows or horses, most often they took the form of a gigantic black hound with broad feet, shaggy hair, drooping ears and saucer-sized eyes. Any dauntless, but foolish, individual who dared follow a Skriker back to its lair would soon be watching that lethal monster starting to walk backwards, its gigantic eyes fully fixed on the unfortunate pursuer. And when it got within arm's reach, it would slowly sink into the earth or, on less frequent occasions, vanish into thin air. The Skriker name



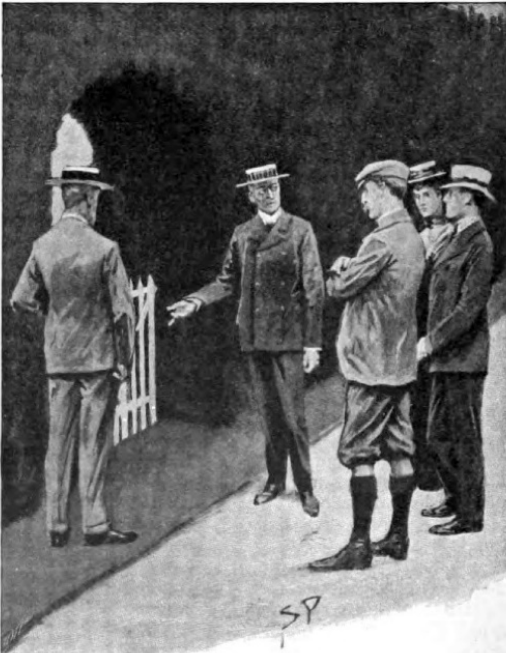
The Dark Walk at Stonyhurst College as depicted in Stonyhurst, Its Past and Present

derives from the screams it was said to utter whenever it chose to make itself invisible. And if someone were courageous enough to take it on, the weapons he used just passed through it without rendering the creature the least bit of harm.

When Doyle wrote *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, he may have been consciously or,

perhaps subconsciously, recalling how terrified he had been upon first being told this hair-raising story. By putting his own spin on the tale, Doyle was sure his adoring public would be thrilled with it too.

The older students at Stonyhurst were always fond of telling macabre tales about the school's very own Sherburne ghost, an apparition that haunted the Dark Walk, the most remote section of the school's campus. This "grand and magnificent avenue of trees, full of shadowy beauty and overhung by the richest foliage," the Dark Walk was regarded as one of the finest avenues in all of Lancashire. (8) It was to this secluded spot that young Conan Doyle would steal away to smoke his pipe beneath its majestically silent arch of yews. Doyle had been told that prior to Stonyhurst having been issued its charter, Richard Francis Sherburne, nine-year-old heir of the estate, had somehow lost his way amongst the bushes and trees that lined the Dark Walk. To keep his stomach from growling, he ate some easily accessible yew berries, unaware that ingesting them meant certain death. Soon, Richard was convulsing on the ground and died alone. The young scion's premature death brought a permanent end to the Sherburne dynasty, and the upshot of this tragedy



Sidney Paget's depiction of the gate at the end of the yew alley at Baskerville Hall

was that *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* reported that this celebrated and respected family's name was forever stricken from the rolls of Lancashire's gentry. (9)

But the Dark Walk was also the gateway for sneaking off the grounds and going into town for surreptitious purchases of tobacco. Having made their way to the end of the alley, students would then veer off from its wide dirt avenue to head down the narrow path that led to the kennels of the gentlemen philosophers, the elite upperclassmen of the school. These kennels housed their dogs "which

can make ever so much noise ... well-fashioned, well-bred, hound like creatures...." (10) Once you had made it that far without getting caught, it was just a short walk to town.

A great portion of the plot of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* appears to have sprung straight out of Doyle's years at Stonyhurst. In 1872, this conservative Jesuit-run institution found itself at the epicentre of the most sensational cause célèbre of the 19th century. A man claiming to be Roger Charles Tichborne, an adventurer lost at sea somewhere off the South American coast and presumed dead (and by chance, the heir to a huge fortune), remarkably reappeared in England. Soon, the resurrected baronet began collecting his large annual allowance. But there were several skeptics in the family who believed his mother, Lady Tichborne, had been duped. These relatives would not let the issue rest and took the claimant to court to prove that he was nothing more than a mere imposter. As the actual Roger Tichborne had studied at Stonyhurst as a teenager, any member of the Stonyhurst faculty and staff who had been there during his preparatory years was fair game to be called to testify about what they knew about "Roger." It was not his facial features, nor his hair colour, nor any beauty marks that unmasked his deceit; it was simply his inability to

recall any of the details of the Stonyhurst game called Bandy that ultimately led to his conviction. The details of this event are a virtual image of the goings-on of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. There, we learn that Charles Baskerville's brother Rodger had traveled to South America a la Roger Tichborne and was thought to have "died unmarried." This was not at all the case! Rodger Baskerville had travelled throughout Central and South America, married and fathered a child who bore his name. After his father's death, the junior Baskerville returned to England, changed his name, not merely once, but twice (just as in the Tichborne case) – first, to Vandeleur, and then to Stapleton – and then had gone about scaring his father's superstitious brother (Charles Baskerville) to death by using a Skriker-like hound, in the hope of becoming the sole heir to the family fortune. This sort of treachery, name changing and beguilement of the naive bears a remarkable similarity to the machinations of the fake Roger Tichborne.

The Hound of the Baskervilles opens with Dr. Mortimer telling Holmes that Charles Baskerville's "favourite walk was down a path between two hedges of yew trees, the famous Yew Alley of Baskerville Hall." There, "he went out for his walk to think and to smoke his usual cigar." And, it was at the terminus of this yew-lined walkway that his body was discovered. Dr. Mortimer goes on to tell Holmes that, "In the months before his death, Sir Charles was a very worried man... He often asked me whether I had seen any strange animal or heard the cry of a hound on the moor at night." He goes on to inform Holmes that, "It looked like a small black cow," except for the fact that "they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!" Of importance is that the Dark Walk of Stonyhurst and the yew alley of Baskerville Hall had only a single gate at their respective points of egress.

One of the closing scenes of Doyle's masterwork has Jack Stapleton's house under observation by Holmes, Watson and Inspector Lestrade. When they enter a locked bedroom, the first thing they observe is that it "had been fashioned into a museum, and the walls were lined by a number of glass-topped cases full of... butterflies and moths...." This room resembles the museum at Stonyhurst that housed "many specimens of butterflies, beetles, and other insects." (11)

The evil Jack Stapleton had become a "schoolmaster in the North of England" upon his return from South and Central America. Stapleton boasts to Watson about his many talents — zoologist, botanist and naturalist. During Holmes's research into the family, staff members at the British Museum tell him that Stapleton is "a recognized authority" on lepidopterology – the study of butterflies and moths. And when Dr. Watson struggles to identify the mysterious noise emanating from a nearby

bog, Stapleton immediately tells him the sound is that of a bittern, “a very rare bird – practically extinct – in England.” When these characteristics are linked, the chain perfectly matches the traits found in one of the first celebrated alumnus of Stonyhurst College, Sir Charles Waterton — a native of northern England (Yorkshire), a naturalist, a South American adventurer and a bird expert. In fact, Waterton was the proud owner of the dog that was selected to represent the standard of the modern English mastiff, a dog that made up one-half of the breed that Stapleton uses to bring about Sir Henry’s death. Waterton was also skilled at taxidermy, and his unorthodox and unique methods yielded creatures that were lifelike and, at times, purposely grotesque. In a similar vein, Stapleton deftly applies phosphorus to his large dog to impart it with a spectral hell-hound appearance.

We believe this combination of buildings under construction, ghostly large-footed hounds, newly deceased scions, yew-lined walks, naturalist-explorers, and hovering apparitions served as Doyle’s inspiration for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

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The Detective and the Spy: a Portia Adams Adventure

Editor's Note: Master Bootmaker Angela Misri is the creator of the Portia Adams series of mystery novels. Her latest is due out this spring (available for pre-order now) and this is an exclusive sneak peak into that book, titled The Detective and the Spy. The following is the first chapter, just to whet your appetite.

London, Spring 1935

The curse of a great city is in its circulatory system — those veins of traffic, those arteries of tube stops — all it takes is one blockage and the body shuts down.

The tracks behind the railway station were swarming with officers this morning. The area was being cordoned off, marking the recent troubles, and the irate public pressed against the bobbies assigned to keep them at bay, like ocean waves heaving against anchored buoys.

My dark felt hat pulled low over my brow, I manoeuvred my way through this crowd, targeting a member of the constabulary who would let me through the cordon. My chosen profession required that I move incognito amongst the general population. Witnesses and criminals had a way of making themselves scarce around detectives. There were several photos of me in local newspapers, but they didn't look anything like me, and that was quite on purpose. "P.C. Adams the detective" was an elaborate costume I wore to make an impression, regalia that consisted of high heels, artful makeup and expensive clothing.

By comparison, Portia Adams, my true self, was totally forgettable. Today I wore my father's old threadbare coat and my lowest-heeled boots. My shoulder-length hair was pinned up in a bun under my hat. It would be hard to mistake me for the celebrity P.C. Adams. Unless you knew me.

"Ma'am, you'll have to step back," said the deep voice of Constable Perkins before he realized who he was talking to. "Blimey! Miss Adams, didn't recognize you there."

He extended his gloved hand my way to guide me through the cordon, ignoring the protests of the people around us.

"Sergeant Michaels called for you eh?" Perkins said, pointing to where the rotund officer could be seen puffing away at a cigar. "Figures. It's an odd one."

“My favourite,” I answered with a smile his way. I picked my way through the snow, unexpectedly deep at this time of year, headed in the direction he had pointed, dodging the melee of police and firemen. My eyes were everywhere: the tracks, the rubbish strewn about, the snow, the disturbance of the snow, the myriad of footprints — all of it could be relevant. I pulled out my Christmas gift from my grandfather, a new Contax camera. It had been delivered a few days ago, and had included a note of apology for his absence. Sherlock Holmes remained abroad, travelling the Indian subcontinent, and no doubt causing trouble wherever he went.

I grinned, thinking of my grandfather, covering my inappropriate facial expression with my camera as I snapped several landscape shots of the full scene, turning back to take a few of the police cordon, and then one of Sergeant Michaels.

“Make sure’n get that lazy drunk sobered up, Rourke,” Michaels barked at one of his constables, his open winter coat flapping in the wind like the wings of a large bat. The constable was escorting a scrawny man who seemed to be having trouble putting one foot in front of the other.

“Adams,” he said by way of greeting.

“Inspector,” I replied with a nod.

He froze at the mention of his new rank. His cigar threatened to fall out of his suddenly gaping mouth, but somehow managed to stay attached at the corner of his lip where it trembled precariously like a diver who couldn’t quite make up her mind to take the plunge.

“Your uniform shirt is brand new,” I answered before he could ask, “and it’s been tailored, which none of your other shirts have been. You’re hardly the type to visit a tailor for fashion reasons, but you would need their services in order to get the pips sewn onto your shirt. You’re wearing your jacket, but I’d wager that if you took it off, we’d see your Sergeant stripes very loosely stitched onto your new shirt — because they’re about to be replaced, no doubt.”

“It’s not official yet, Adams,” Michaels hissed at me, stepping close so no one would overhear. “Keep your Goddamned detecting down!”

“And yet it is my ‘Goddamned detecting’ you called me down here for.”

“Bollocks. This here is what you’d call an educational opportunity,” he replied, tapping his cigar with his ring finger so that the ashes fell in a neat grey pattern on the snow. “Better that you learn what you can from official sources rather than the ones closer to you and less legal if you know what I mean.”

I did know what he meant. He was referring to my grandparents. But not Dr. and the first Mrs. Watson. Michaels was referring to my two living grandparents, Sherlock Holmes and Irene Adler, neither of whom

Michaels held in high regard. A yell from somewhere behind us gave me the excuse to move past it quickly. “I don’t know what to say...”

“Well, that’s a flippin’ first,” he answered sarcastically, his eyes on the man being hauled away from the cordon, “but how about you start with ‘thank-you Sergeant Michaels for considering my further education’?”

I grimaced at his condescending words until he gave up waiting for my gratitude. The man who had caused the opportune disturbance gripped his picket sign in both hands, using it to beat back against the constables, his words railing against the King of England no less. That’s a good way to arrange a cold evening in the basement of Scotland Yard. The problem was that the state of the pound and the resultant suffering of the British people meant that his words accurately reflected the current sentiment against the Royal Family. I scanned the crowd, picking out other signs, including a few for the Ship Builders Union and one for the Irish Feminist League.

“Go take a look at the scene, would you?” Michaels said, the cigar wagging back and forth at the corner of his mouth.

“The train jumped the tracks, that much is obvious,” I replied, looking at the tracks and the position of the train, and up at the officers standing on the platform. “This morning, and quite early, before the rush hour of the morning commute.”

“And how do you know that?” he prompted, hands in his coat pockets.

“The train had no rail cars, and the snow has been falling steadily all morning but hasn’t covered the damaged train,” I replied, pointing to the vehicle. “It was being moved into position to take on its cars.”

I looked down the rail tracks in both directions — the ones leading to the platform, and the ones leading back to the rail yard and spied Annie trying to talk her way through the police cordon closely followed by an ancient photographer I recognized from *The Sunday Times*. The young blonde saw me looking and shook her head. I knew her well enough to recognize that her journalistic pride kept her from asking me to chaperone her around the crime scene, especially with a photographer in tow. I turned my attention back to Michaels. “But why did it leave the rail yard without its cars?”

“It was being moved into position to take on its cars when it accelerated in this direction,” Michaels put in, “at least according to the damp squib who was drivin’ it.”

“So, it started in the rail yard, left the yard without its rail cars, and ran into this platform?”

“Looks that way, don’t it?” he replied, stepping up the stairs that led to the platform to speak to one of his officers, his coat flapping around him

comically. If the winds got much gustier, he would be able to fly back to Scotland Yard.

“But why?” I said aloud, running my hand along the track and looking back towards the rail yard where other trains stood in neat rows.

“Ice or speed?” Michaels called from where he stood.

“Irrelevant.” I replied, though not loudly enough for him to hear. I had now walked away from the platform and was making my way along the east side of the tracks slowly, collecting and dismissing clues one by one.

I was halfway to the rail yard when Constable Bonhomme caught up to me, slightly out of breath and presenting me with a break cable. “The sergeant said to show you this, Miss Adams. He said you can tell that the train was going too fast by the way this cable broke.”

I examined the stripped cable. “Yes, I see, Bonhomme. Thank you. But it doesn’t explain why the train was speeding, or even how he got up to that speed in time to jump the tracks and hit the platform.”

“The driver, Harold Digby’s his name, is in no condition to tell us how he did it,” Bonhomme answered, backing up as I continued my careful examination of the rails at our feet, “Sergeant Michaels says between the drink and the crash, it’ll be hours before he’s of any use to us.”

“He was drunk when the accident happened?” I asked, looking up from the ground for a moment and noticing the talc on Bonhomme’s sleeve. Another new baby in the family, I confirmed, looking at his shoulder to where evidence of dried spit-up could be discerned if you were looking for it.

Bonhomme nodded. “If that’ll be all, I should get this evidence back to the lorry.”

My eyes flicked from the man at my side to where I could see Constable Brian Dawes speaking to Michaels on the platform. The tall man was too disciplined to wave, but he flashed me a quick grin when Michaels looked down at his notes for a second.

I grinned back like an idiot. There were a lot of ways in which my brain differed from those around me, especially when it came to my rigid focus on details, but when it came to attraction, I was a fool, just like every human before me.

Bonhomme ran between the tracks towards the platform, distracting me for a moment from Brian, and something about his large boot prints in the snow captured my attention — a wire had been revealed by his footsteps.

“What?” I whispered, recognizing the danger. “NO!” I yelled as loudly as I could, my eyes on the constable still running away from my position. “Bonhomme, get off the tracks!”

And then I was flying through the air, caught by the absolution of darkness.

A Toast to the Worst Man in London

By Dan Andriacco presented at Gaslight Gala 12 January 2018

“My collection of M’s is a fine one,” Sherlock Holmes told Dr. Watson in “The Adventure of the Empty House.” He went on to say: “Moriarty himself is enough to make any letter illustrious, and here is Morgan the poisoner, and Merridew of abominable memory, and Mathews, who knocked out my left canine in the waiting-room at Charing Cross, and, finally, here is our friend of to-night.” That “friend” was the infamous Colonel Sebastian Moran, the second most dangerous man in London.

But what of the worst man in London? Holmes unjustly neglected that first-rate villain, who was also an M. We, however, shall give him his due. I refer, of course, to Charles August Milverton, the “king of all the blackmailers” [*HISS!*]

- A man, who gave Sherlock Holmes “a creeping, shrinking sensation” akin to that he felt when looking at the “slithery, gliding, venomous” serpents in the Zoo with their “deadly eyes and wicked, flattened faces;” [*HISS!*]

- A man with “a smiling face and a heart of marble,” like a Mr. Pickwick gone wrong; [*HISS!*]

- A man who methodically and at his leisure tortured the soul and wrung the nerves of his victims “in order to add to his already swollen money bags;” [*HISS!*]

- A man who was “a genius in his own way” and as cunning at the Evil One;” [*HISS!*]

- A man who wore astrakhan outerwear, a sartorial affectation shared by Thaddeus Sholto and the ignoble King of Bohemia; [*HISS!*]

- A man whose maid, Agatha, is the only woman actually known by Canonical account to have engaged in long walks and intimate talks with Mr. Sherlock Holmes; [*HISS!*]

- And, finally, a man who suffered five bullets (“Take that, you hound – and that! – and that! – and that! – and that!”) before the sixth one caused him to utter the stupendously unsurprising cry, “You’ve done me;”

[*YAY!*]

Fellow Sherlockians, let us lift our glasses to toast The Worst Man in London, Charles Augustus Milverton!

“a few lines upon a sheet of paper” **– Conan Doyle’s other work for** **The Strand Magazine**

By Mark Alberstat

Mark Alberstat is co-editor of Canadian Holmes and author of many Sherlockian and Doylean articles.



n Alpine Pass on “Ski” was Conan Doyle’s next non-Sherlock Holmes contribution to *The Strand Magazine* after “The Lord of Château Noir.” The non-fiction piece was first published in December 1894 and tells of Doyle’s adventures in March 1894 in Switzerland, when he travelled by ski from Davos to Arosa, passing by Maienfelder Furka Pass, becoming the first Englishman to do so. The article is believed to be the first popular account of skiing.

This article on one of Doyle’s many sporting pursuits was published exactly one year after he threw Holmes off the Reichenbach Falls and, for all the world knew, the detective was going to stay there.



DR. CONAN DOYLE ON “SKI”

Despite his literary success, Doyle was clearly self-effacing when it came to skiing.

Whenever you brace yourself for a fall, it never comes off. Whenever you think yourself absolutely secure, it is all over with you. You come to a hard ice slope at an angle of seventy-five degrees and you zigzag up it, digging the side of your ski into it, and feeling that if a mosquito settles upon you, you are gone. But nothing ever happens and you reach the top in safety. Then you stop upon the level to congratulate your companion, and you have just time to say, "What a lovely view is this!" when you find yourself standing upon two shoulder-blades, with your ski tied tightly around your neck.

Not surprisingly, the skis used in Victorian times are a far cry from what we see today on the slopes. As Doyle wrote in the beginning of the article to introduce his readers to this new wintertime sport:

They are two slips of elm wood, eight feet long, four inches broad, with a square heel, turned-up toes, and straps in the centre to secure your feet. No one, to look at them, would guess at the possibilities which lurk in them.

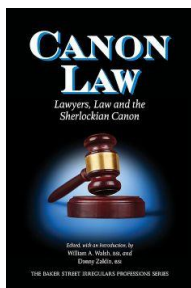
Despite these and other humorous lines in the article, the focus is a notable journey he undertook on March 23, 1894 with Tobias and Johann Branger.

The trio headed out before 4 a.m. that morning, starting in the moonlight. Seven hours later, after skiing, sliding, trudging and hiking, sometimes through snow drifts up to their waists, they were through their arduous journey and were "finishing a comfortable luncheon at the Seehoff" by the time the Arosa locals believed they would be coming through the pass.



A NOVICE TURNING—DR. CONAN DOYLE

“Holmes gave me a brief review”



Canon Law: Lawyers, Law and the Sherlockian Canon, Co-Edited by William A. Walsh, BSI, and Donny Zaldin, BSI (2018, The Baker Street Irregulars Press, \$39.95 USD).

The Baker Street Irregulars (BSI) Press launched its Professions Series in January 2016 with *Nerve and Knowledge: Doctors, Medicine and the Sherlockian Canon*, which posited that the deductive process of Holmes was patterned after the art of medical diagnosis.

That vocation was followed up by a second entry in the series, *Canon Law: Lawyers, Law and the Sherlockian Canon*, which launched in January 2019. The law and legal issues, which arise along the trail of Holmes’s cases, provide Canon fodder for this informative book, written by 14 lawyers, one Judge, a corrections officer and a Victorian scholar, all with impressive Sherlockian and non-Sherlockian résumés. Holmes’s “methods” allow him to almost invariably navigate successfully the minefield of criminal activity; the co-editors’ choice of legal issues and their organization allow us to travel back in time to observe and hear Sherlock Holmes investigate crime in order to enforce the law, and if he is equally successful when he finds himself accused of breaking it.

In *A Study in Scarlet*, 1887, Watson states that Holmes “has a good practical knowledge of British law.” *Canon Law*’s opening chapter examines whether Watson’s assessment was accurate or not. Following chapters examine criminal law issues present in other stories, including homicide, the insanity defence and self-defense. Canonical examples of Holmes’s “private justice” are examined in the tongue-in-cheek chapter titled “He Needed Killin’.” The civil law pertaining to blackmail, matrimonial law, property law, and intellectual property are explored, referencing pertinent stories. One chapter poses whether Mycroft Holmes breached the *Official Secrets Act* of 1911. Also canvassed are which crimes led to trials and how expert evidence was used, and in a chapter on Victorian/Edwardian prisons, what prospects defendants faced upon conviction.

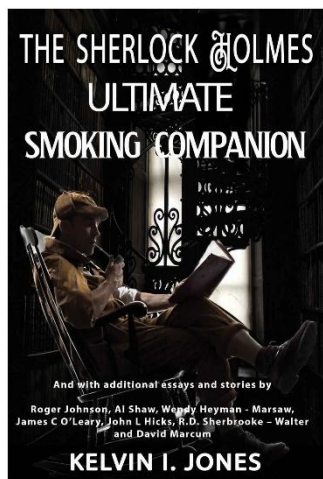
The grand finale is the 1919 “trial of the century”: The King v. Sherlock Holmes, in the form of a partial transcript of the secret hearing conducted in 1919, ordered sealed for one hundred years, and only just released. Accused of 42 charges of breaking the law while plying his trade as a consulting detective, a dignified Holmes at age 65 is pictured seated “in the dock” at the Old Bailey, London. After reading the written arguments

of the Crown and of the self-represented defendant, The Lord Chief Justice (a former Associate Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal of the State of New York, and an eminent Sherlockian) examines the evidence, considers the competing arguments, states his reasons and pronounces judgment.

This educational and entertaining book comes highly recommended for Sherlockians and non-Sherlockians alike who are interested in the law.

Order from the BSI website: <https://bakerstreetirregulars.com/2018/12/28/canon-law/> or from Donny Zaldin at donaldzaldin@rogers.com.

- Thomas A. Horrocks



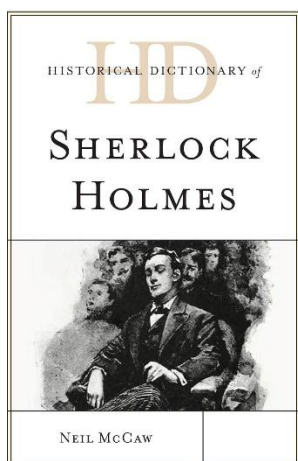
The Sherlock Holmes Ultimate Smoking Companion, Edited by Kelvin Jones (2019, Cunning Crime Books, \$14.50 CAD).

Jones has collected, edited and at times written parts of this collection of essays and pastiches, which is focused on the Holmes Canon and its relation to smoking, in all of its various forms. With contributions from Roger Johnson, Al Shaw, David Marcum and Bootmaker Wendy Heyman-Marsaw, the reader is in for an erudite treat that does anything but go up in smoke.

Johnson, editor of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, contributes the opening preface as well as a pastiche, “The Adventure of the Grace Chalice.” The opening two chapters of the book highlight what seems to be every mention, whisper or thought the original 60 stories has to say on smoking and tobacco. It is a fun read that highlights parts of the stories that most readers plow through to get to the good bits. In the case of this book, these are the good bits. Heyman-Marsaw’s contribution, A Brief Social History of Tobacco Use in Sherlockian England, is a well-researched piece that takes the reader from 1586 to the Baker Street sitting room and ends with a poem about cigars written by Kipling, as well as a recipe for Smoker’s Coffee that first appeared in her *Canadian Holmes* Mrs. Hudson column.

If you have even a passing interest in the topic, this book should be on your bookshelf, or at least, wedged into the toe of your Persian slipper.

- Mark Alberstat



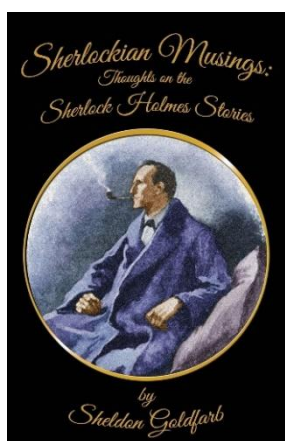
The Historical Dictionary of Sherlock Holmes, Edited by Neil McCaw (2019, Rowman & Littlefield, \$130.00 CAD)

This 430-page book contains a wide assortment of entries about the Holmes Canon and takes the stories as fact, teasing out over 1,000 entries both cultural and historic that are cross referenced within each paragraph. The volume can be an excellent reference book for snippets of information, as each entry is rather short but could lead the reader to deeper research.

The introduction sets the stage for the rest of the book, discussing the Sherlock Holmes stories in relation to Doyle's own writing career but also that of Western literature.

From Abbas Parva, the first entry, to Zoology, the last, the book can be a fun exercise to plunge into at any point and read an entry on Charles Darwin, the King of Bohemia or Sidney Paget. For anyone with a Sherlockian library, the book is a combination of Jack Tracy's *The Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana* and Chris Redmond's *Lives Beyond Baker Street*. The only thing holding this reviewer back from recommending the book is the price. At \$130.00 CAD, plus shipping, you could easily buy the other two books mentioned and have plenty left over for a another few books and a pint to enjoy them with.

- Mark Alberstat



Sherlockian Musings: Thoughts on the Sherlock Holmes Stories by Sheldon Goldfarb (2019, MX books, \$16.95 US)

British Columbia-based Sherlockian Goldfarb thinks, ponders and challenges us on each of the 60 stories through a series of three- to five-page entries. Following no specific format, each story gets his unique questioning gaze.

The book came about from Goldfarb creating these discussion points for The Stormy Petrels of Vancouver. Reading through these chapters can be a fun and interesting way to make the reader rethink certain aspects of each case and possibly add some lively discussion at their next local meeting.

- Mark Alberstat

Strictly Personal

Where a Canadian Sherlockian goes under the microscope for all of us to learn more about them.

Barbara Rusch

Age and Birthplace: I have come, I feel, to that time of life when even the proudest beauty finds the half-light more welcome. My people have been leaders in Pernambuco for generations.

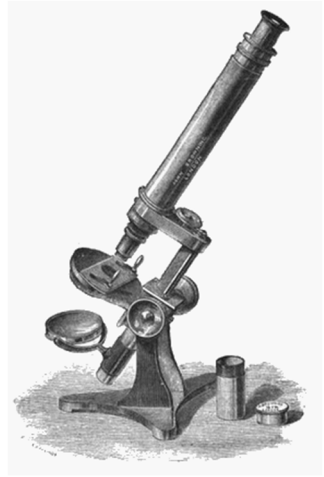
Occupation: Collector, Ephemerist and Public Speaker. In my profession, all sorts of odd knowledge becomes useful, and these rooms of mine are a storehouse for it. It is a good collection, but not a very valuable one, consisting of great rolls of paper, a litter of bottles and a number of neat little bundles. These relics have a history, so much so that they are history. Nothing could induce me to leave my collection, though now and again I drive down to Sotheby's or Christie's.

In school I excelled at: Deciphering palimpsests and Greek translations of Thucydides. One of the brightest intellects of the university and the winner of the Fortescue scholarship, I hoped to become a beacon of the future, though I was wayward, dissipated and unprincipled.

A great evening for me is: A box for *Les Huguenots* to hear the De Reszkes, stopping at Marcini's for a little dinner on the way.

Goal in life: There are a dozen specimens in the market at the present moment which fill gaps in my collection, and which I am unable to purchase for want of a few hundred pounds. Just think what I could do with five million dollars – perhaps even acquire a piece of Queen Victoria's wedding cake. Why, I have the nucleus of a national collection. I shall be the Hans Sloane of my age and perhaps live to see my name in the honours list, though I take pride in being the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Other hobbies and interests: It's an extraordinary thing that all my life I have been collecting other people's news, and the documents in my collection provide a perfect quarry for the student of the social scandals of the late Victorian era. I am, in fact, the student of many subjects, and you may be surprised at the universality of my interests. The general effect is





amiable though eccentric. One day a profession might be made out of what up to this time has been the merest hobby.

Favourite dining experience: I am exceedingly fond of Goldini's, though I may often be found enjoying something nutritious at a small table in the front window at Simpson's, looking down at the rushing stream of life in the Strand. But undoubtedly my favourite establishment is an inn called Chequers, where the port is above mediocrity and the linen above

reproach.

Three favourite Canonical tales: Any story with a woman named Violet; the mystery of Mr. James Phillimore, who, stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world; and the singular affair of the aluminium crutch.

Most prized items in my Sherlockian collection: A cardboard box containing – not ears – but the contents of Lady Conan Doyle's underwear drawer at Windlesham; a photograph of me and my husband Donny Zaldin (the best and wisest man whom I have ever known) with Jeremy Brett; an invitation to Conan Doyle's wedding to Jean Leckie; and a pair of knickers worn by "a certain gracious lady."

If I could live anywhere in the world it would be: That great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained.

If I could live at any time in history, it would be: Always 1895.

If I could ask Holmes, Watson and Conan Doyle each one question, they would be:

Holmes: Who was the best and wisest man you have ever known?

Watson: Why did you never write a tell-all book about your experience of women which extends over many nations and three separate continents?

Conan Doyle: Which doctor wrote the Sherlock Holmes tales? You or Dr. Watson?

I would like my epitaph to read: "What a woman – oh, what a woman."

OOTMAKERS' DIARY

... it is a page from some private diary.

— *The Five Orange Pips*

Saturday, December 7, 2019

At 1:10 Meyers Mike Ranieri welcomed those in attendance to the North York branch of the Toronto Public Library and declared the meeting to look into *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, open.

He announced that Donny Zaldin had decided to step down from the post of Col. Ross, organizer of the annual Silver Blaze event. After thanking Donny for his many years of service in that capacity, Mike said the role would be taken over by the team of Karen Campbell and David Sanders.

Mike then showed a short rap video called 'The Crazy Adventures of Wassup Holmes,' written by Jordan Allen Dutton and Eric Weiner, music by J.A.Q. and directed by Billy Raines.

Former Bootmaker Geordie Telfer spoke about the mysterious disappearance of Toronto theatre owner Ambrose Small, having recently written a book on the subject, of which he had copies for sale. Telfer also accompanied himself on a guitar as he sang several songs about the disappearance.

Before people went to enjoy the Tim Hortons goodies and coffee provided by Mrs. Hudson - Philip Elliott and Mrs. Turner - David Sanders, Quiz mistress Karen Campbell distributed the quiz.

During the break Donny Zaldin was taking orders for *Saratoga At the Finish Line*, subtitled 'From Silver Blaze to the Crooked Man,' edited by Donny and Barbara Rusch. The book contains articles, songs and a quiz, contributed by Sherlockians, around those two stories.

After break Don Roebuck expounded on his theory as to why Doyle married off Watson.

Karen Campbell and Karen Gold led the audience in a rendition of *These Boots are Made for Walking*, to the tune of that Nancy Sinatra hit, that Karen Campbell had written and presented at a meeting years ago.

This was followed by Karen Campbell and Karen Gold, along with David Sanders, leading a singalong to *How Much is that Doggie*, written by David Sanders, to the tune of *How Much is that Doggie in the Window?*

Karen Campbell then took up the quiz, the winners being John Gehan, Marilyn Penner and Don Roebuck.

The annual general meeting was held, followed by a draw for door prizes won by Don Roebuck and Karen Gold.

Meyers then reiterated the schedule of events for 2020 and declared the meeting adjourned.

- David Sanders

January 15 to 19, 2020 — BSI Weekend in N.Y.

A contingent of 11 Bootmakers: Doug Elliott (transplanted from Toronto to Australia), Cliff and Doris Goldfarb, Hartley and Marilyn Nathan, Charles and Kris Prepolec, Mike Ranieri (attending his first BSI Dinner), Edwin Van der Flaes, Barbara Rusch and Donny Zaldin joined Sherlockians from over half a dozen countries spread over five continents in The Big Apple for the 86th annual Sherlock Homes birthday celebrations of the Baker Street Irregulars. The long weekend was filled with formal and informal opportunities to gather for the common purpose of celebrating the Master's 166th birthday and review important Sherlockian events in rhyme, mixed with Sherlockian camaraderie and entertainment, over food and drink. After 23 years at the helm as Wiggins, Mike Whelan passed the baton to Michael Kean, who bestowed upon Mike the honorific title of "Wiggins Emeritus."

On Wednesday, the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes (ASH) kicked off the weekend with an informal dinner.

On Thursday, early risers participated in the Christopher Morley Walk. That evening, the BSI Distinguished Speaker, bestselling, award-winning fantasy author Dr. Theodora Goss, spoke about anthropological aspects in the Sherlockian Canon.

On Friday, bibliophiles searched out printed and other Sherlockian treasures at Otto Penzler's Mysterious Bookshop. Following, Sherlockians attended The William Gillette Memorial Luncheon, which included a dramatic reading between Holmes and Irene Adler, and that evening, either the annual (open-to-all) Gaslight Gala or (by-invitation-only) Baker Street Irregulars Dinner, at which Barbara Rusch toasted Sherlock Holmes and Queen Victoria (on the 166th and 200th anniversaries of their births) and Donny Zaldin performed a Musical Canonical Quiz with BSI Maestro Henry Boote. As usual, attendees of both dinners celebrated the year's nine investitures at 2:21 a.m. at O'Lunney's Irish Pub near Times Square.

On Saturday morning, Sherlockian books and collectibles were snapped up at the Merchants's Room – which hosted the book launch and signing of a literary smorgasbord of Sherlockian titles. The Beacon Society and

The Clients of Adrian Mulliner-Junior Bloodstain Society held their annual meetings. The afternoon BSI Luncheon Reception was followed by “The Very Irregular Lost in New York with a Bunch of Sherlockians Dinner,” for those non-theatre goers at loose ends on Saturday night.

On Sunday, the weekend concluded with the informal ASH Brunch, after which Sherlockians dispersed but not before making their annual vows to keep in touch in the coming year – until they meet up again in NY, scheduled for January 6-10, 2021.

- Donny Zaldin

Saturday, January 25, 2020 — The Blue Carbuncle Awards Luncheon

Forty followers of the Master Detective assembled in a dining room of the Toronto Lawn Tennis Club for the Blue Carbuncle Awards Luncheon, on Saturday, January 25th. At 12:03 p.m., Mike Ranieri, in his role as Meyers, invited the attendees to take their seats so the proceedings could begin.

During the meal a number of Canonical toasts were proposed:

Hartley Nathan toasted King Edward VII.

Karen Campbell toasted Inspector Lestrade.

Peggy Perdue toasted Irene Adler.

Barbara Rusch toasted Holmes and A Gracious Lady in rhyme.

Mike Ranieri sang his toast to Mycroft Holmes to the tune of Frank Sinatra’s *Witchcraft*.

Bruce Aikin toasted the many fans of Sherlock Holmes.

Dave Drennan toasted Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Then we came to our annual awards. The True Davidson Award for the best formal paper presented at a meeting went to Hartley Nathan for “Sherlock Holmes and Jack the Ripper.” There were two Derrick Murdoch awards presented. This award is for the best paper published in *Canadian Holmes*. For the year 2019 the award went to Catherine Cooke for “Creating Reality – Conan Doyle’s concern to present fiction as fact in *The Lost World*,” in the Spring 2018 issue. The award for 2020 went to Chris Redmond for “It is a Capital mistake,” which appeared in the Spring 2019 issue. The Warren Carleton Award for the best presentation other than a formal paper was presented to Donny Zaldin for the Silver Blaze Race.

The Master Bootmaker Awards were announced. Receiving their shoehorns for service to the Bootmakers and the Sherlockian world were: Constantine Kaoukakis of the Wisteria Lodgers of Edmonton, Alberta; Mark Hanson, of the Cesspuddlians of London, Ontario and John Gehan of the Bootmakers of Toronto.

We then took a break and indulged in the desserts provided for us.

After the break Barbara Rusch introduced our guest speaker, Garry Toffoli, Vice-Chair of the Canadian Royal Heritage Trust. His topic was “The Three Monarchs of the Sherlockian Age.” He spoke about Victoria, Edward VII and George V, whose reigns included the years from 1887 to 1927 – the years in which the Sherlock Holmes stories were published.

Donny Zaldin presented a quiz on the placemat pictures created by Steve Mason. Each one depicted a Canonical tale and attendees had to figure out which one was represented. The winners were Bruce Aikin, John Gehan and Doug Wrigglesworth. As the first-place winner, Bruce Aikin was presented with a book donated by our guest speaker. The book is titled *The Maple Leaf Forever: A Celebration of Canadian Symbols* – a rather ironic award since Bruce was the only American citizen present.

Names were then drawn for some door prizes provided by Mike Ranieri.

To close the awards luncheon, Mike read an anonymous poem called Victoria Regina, which he found on the internet.

The meeting was then adjourned.

- Bruce D. Aikin

Sunday, January 26, 2020 — The Twenty-third Marlene Aig Memorial Brunch

Three Bootmakers and one guest met for brunch at Sambuca’s Restaurant at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning to honour the memory of Marlene Aig. Marlene was an early member of the Bootmakers who did graduate work in Journalism at the University of Toronto in the early 1970s. She often came back to Toronto for our Annual Dinners. She started a brunch for local members and out of town guests to fill the time waiting for the train. She passed away in her sleep on April 25, 1996, 24 years ago.

The members present were Phillip Elliott, Kathy Burns and Bruce Aikin. A friend of Kathy’s was the guest.

- Bruce D. Aikin



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