

SHERLOCK Stock and Barrel

The cast of the world premiere season by Encore Theatre Inc in August-September 2007.

From left Dr Watson [Gareth Wilding-Forbes], Miss Adler [Catherine Munday], Sherlock Holmes [Kirk Alexander]. Mrs Hudson [Joanne Gabriel] and Professor Moriarty [Chris Gaffney]



Back in October I commented favourably on Cenarth Fox's latest theatrical extravaganza, *Sherlock Stock & Barrel*, though I was only able to read the script. Now I've heard the show on CD and can report that it works beautifully. To recap: five actors set out to tell all sixty stories in eighty minutes. Kirk Alexander, Gareth Wilding-Forbes, Chris Gaffney, Joanne Gabriel and Catherine Munday only manage twenty-five, and the result, necessarily played at a frantic pace, is dramatic, tuneful, ingenious, and above all very funny.

Roger Johnson *Sherlock Holmes Society of London*

SHERLOCK Stock and Barrel

Some amazing adventures of
Mr. Sherlock Holmes

**THIS IS A PREVIEW SCRIPT AND CAN ONLY BE USED FOR
PERUSAL PURPOSES. THE COMPLETE SCRIPT, SCORE AND CD ARE
AVAILABLE FROM FOX PLAYS**

Words and Music by Cenarth Fox

*Creator of *The Real Sherlock Holmes* and *The Schoolboy Sherlock Holmes**

Starring

*Mr. Sherlock Holmes, Doctor John Watson, Mrs. Hudson
Professor James Moriarty, Miss Irene Adler
and dozens of dynamic dandies and damsels*

*“Life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent.”
Sherlock Holmes*

*Cenarth Fox would have to be one of our most knowledgeable writers on the life and works of Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes', having written 5 Schoolboy Sherlock Holmes novels, the "The Real Sherlock Holmes " and now this almost vaudevillian romp "Sherlock Stock and Barrel" which covers many of Holmes' greatest adventures and some 73 characters all performed by 5 actors. It is a very enjoyable piece and the audience on opening night caught on to the stories and performance style right from the start. It's a bright show which entertains, is a crowd pleaser and would be a great way to finish off a theatre year. To sum up, lots of fun and well worth a look see. **John Gunn Curtain Up***

*The actors succeeded very well and the play was a great success with the audience. **Peter Kemp***

*This fast-moving comedy is particularly a wonderful feast for all Sherlock Holmes fans.
Cheryl Threadgold Melbourne Observer*

*A non-stop comedy, a hansom cab gallop through 25 of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, a night of mystery, mayhem and mirth as you witness the chilling classics that include, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Speckled Band*, *The Valley of Fear*, *The Empty House*, and *The Sign of Four*. There are only 5 actors playing 73 different characters. This entertaining play had you chuckling all night from curtain up to curtain fall. Apart from a wonderful script, Cenarth Fox has included some very catchy tunes. On opening night the auditorium was near a full house and everyone was talking about the show in the foyer after the show. That is always a very good sign that people have enjoyed their evening's entertainment. **Brian Amos Radio Eastern 98.1***

Sherlock, Stock and Barrel

Some amazing adventures of Mr. Sherlock Holmes

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Production Package

Groups staging a **FOX** play or musical receive free production notes [*set-design, costumes, lighting, props, etc*] and with each large-cast musical there are free lyric sheets for chorus members and free activity sheets related to each show's themes. Your local agent may have photos and video and DVD recordings of previous productions. There is a CD for *Sherlock Stock and Barrel* with full backing for the songs and containing many of the sound effects.

Introduction

Sherlock Holmes was the world's first consulting detective. His initial case was published in 1887 and sixty of his cases were recorded, nearly all by Dr. John H. Watson, who became a close friend and colleague of the famous sleuth.

One of the most amazing aspects of the life and work of Sherlock Holmes is his widespread and on-going popularity. Almost as soon as his adventures became known, Holmes became a much-loved character. Well over a century after his first appearance, the tales of the cases have been translated into almost every language known to exist and today the interest in Sherlock Holmes continues apace.

A simple internet search engine query using the words *Sherlock Holmes* will reveal the extent of his popularity. Films, plays, books, magazines, illustrations, broadcasts, podcasts, essays, paraphernalia and more are produced, read, reported on and discussed.

The many cases featuring Holmes, known as the Canon, are the basis of this play. It is a serious attempt at a somewhat less-than-serious journey through many of the stories.

First Performance

Sherlock, Stock and Barrel received its world premiere in Melbourne Australia with a production by Encore Theatre Inc beginning on August 31, 2007. Directed by the playwright, the cast was as follows; Sherlock Holmes [Kirk Alexander], Dr Watson [Gareth Wilding-Forbes], Moriarty [Chris Gaffney], Mrs Hudson [Joanne Gabriel] and Irene Adler [Catherine Munday].

Script

Parts of the script contain words from the stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

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Characters

Sherlock Holmes – a consulting detective [plays 2 other roles]

Dr John H. Watson – a friend and colleague of Holmes [plays 2 other roles]

Mrs Hudson – housekeeper for Holmes and Watson [plays 15 other roles]

Irene Adler – young woman [plays 19 other roles]

Professor James Moriarty [MOR'ITY] – middle-aged man [plays 30 other roles]

Sherlock Holmes is 40 plus. In the adventures as written by Dr Watson, Holmes is tall and thin with a narrow face. Hundreds of actors have portrayed the role for a century and each actor has been different.

John Watson is perhaps a few years older than Holmes and, like Holmes, has been played on stage and in films by many actors from thin and intelligent to portly and dim.

Mrs Hudson is anywhere from middle-aged to elderly. Like her tenants she has been portrayed by a variety of actresses including English and Scottish as anyone from timid and respectful to lively and forthright.

Irene Adler is a real character in the Canon and was an opera singer who was born in New Jersey but who moved to London. The actress playing Irene plays many women in this play including Dr. Watson's spouse.

James Moriarty is a real character in the Canon and was a middle-aged man, a criminal and the major enemy of Sherlock Holmes. The actor playing Moriarty plays many roles both goodies and baddies.

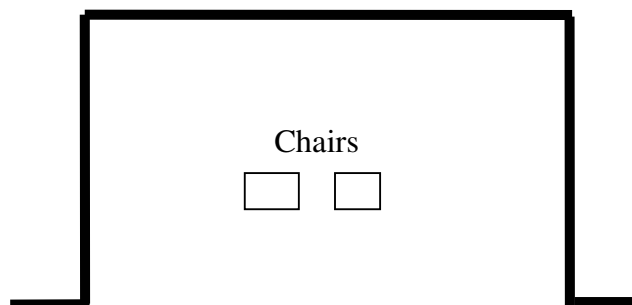
Accent and Appearance

The main characters of Holmes, Watson and Hudson are expected to be English. The many one-off characters should use an accent as befits their person. A well-educated young woman will speak with a refined accent whereas a kitchen-maid will sound like a kitchen-maid. A middle-aged member of the aristocracy or a German royal will look and sound as such. The description of many characters will be impossible or pointless to replicate e.g. freckles for Miss Hunter, but are included as listed in the tales by Sir Arthur.

The stories occur mainly during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. It is expected that each character will have one basic outfit which is topped up or altered using hats, coats, gloves, etc and simple props.

Set Design

Because there are dozens of settings, the suggestion is to have no set; surround your performing space with black curtains and/or flats. Create different locations by lighting different parts of the stage. The sitting-room at 221B Baker Street and Dr Watson's surgery are one and the same. Bring on a chair or two and the room is created. The costumes, props, lighting and special effects are the add-ons for the storytellers. The action moves from interior to exterior scenes, from London streets to a bank-vault, to the sitting-room in Baker Street to a hansom cab, motor-launch or rural setting in a trice so any attempt at realism seems counter-productive. Let the costumed characters tell their tales. Below is a drawing of how your simple staging might be accomplished.



The Script

The script is based on the Canon, the Sherlockian tales as recorded by Dr John H. Watson with Mr Holmes lending a wee hand here and there. Editorial advice has been provided by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

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ADLER *He needs romance
And Cupid's dart
A woman in his life to melt his stony heart.* *He needs romance
And Cupid's dart*

[The chorus is sung again with a coda and the company finish in formation as, hopefully, the audience applauds. As the applause fades, MORIARTY yells loudly]

MOR'ITY Enough! *[Group separates]* Stop this false bravado. *[Hubbub/distress from OTHERS]*

HUDSON *[Reprimanding him]* Professor, behave.

MOR'ITY Without me there'd *be* no Sherlock Holmes.

WATSON I say, Moriarty, this is a bit

MOR'ITY I'm not Moriarty. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*

OTHERS What?

Song 2 Playing Someone Else

MOR'ITY *I'm playing someone else*

OTHERS *He's playing someone else*

QUINTET *I'm/He's playing someone else.*

MOR'ITY *I'm* Stamford.

OTHERS *[Shocked. They're sure he's Moriarty]* Stamford?

MOR'ITY I'm on page one of story one. But where's the recognition I made that famous introduction?

ADLER *[Realises]* Oh, you're the young man who brought our friends together. *[Moves towards him with affection]* Bless you, Mr Stamford.

[Momentary pause as the angry STAMFORD is overwhelmed by the beautiful IRENE. Both women exit for a chair each as MORIARTY introduces our heroes]

MOR'ITY Ah, yes ... *[Indicating]* Dr Watson ... Mr Sherlock Holmes.

HOLMES *[Moving towards WATSON as they shake hands]* You, sir, have been to Afghanistan

WATSON *[Astonished]* How on earth did you know that?

MOR'ITY *[As Stamford to HOLMES]* My friend here *[meaning WATSON]* wants to take diggings. *[MORIARTY exits and women enter and place chairs slightly apart at C]*

HOLMES I have my eye on rooms in Baker Street.

HUDSON *[Indicating chair for WATSON]* Welcome gentlemen, I am Mrs Hudson.

ADLER *[Maid has imaginary note for HOLMES]* An' 'ere's an' imaginary note for Mr 'olmes. *[WATSON and HOLMES sit. HOLMES reads imaginary note]*

WATSON And thus began the case I called *A Study In Scarlet*.

HUDSON Your very first murder, gentlemen.

HOLMES Scotland Yard has a body but no-one to arrest.

WATSON *[Standing]* Shall I go and order you a cab?

HOLMES *[Standing]* By all means, Watson; a taxi for two. *[Women move chairs together]*

WATSON *[Delighted, surprised]* Holmes, you wish *me* to come?

HOLMES If you have nothing better to do.

[They swap seats which is 'climbing' into a hansom cab. HUDSON stands behind them and holds imaginary reins. ADLER stands beside HUDSON with real or imaginary coconut shells]

WATSON I say.

HUDSON Giddy-up. *[She drives; ADLER provides sound effects saying "Clip, clop" or uses shells]*

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WATSON *[Riding in cab]* So, Holmes, what is your theory on this case?

HOLMES *[Riding in cab]* It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence.
[Suddenly yells] Driver, stop! *[HUDSON mimes reining in the horse. FX stop]*
[WATSON and HOLMES alight from cab. Women exit with chairs. We are in a house]

WATSON *[Looking around without walking]* Is this the right house? *[MORIARTY hurries forward and lies on the floor in front of WATSON who is still looking]* Where's the body?

HOLMES Watson, you have not yet developed your skills of observation. *[Indicates body]*
[WATSON shocked at discovering body at his feet. HOLMES kneels and examines the body]

WATSON *[The storyteller, to audience]* Sherlock Holmes examined the body.

MOR'ITY *[As American, sits up leaning on elbow]* I'm a Mormon from America. *[Dies]*

WATSON I say, Holmes, are all your dead bodies so helpful?

HOLMES *[Examining]* This blood belongs to a second individual.

WATSON *[Looking offstage]* Suddenly we were interrupted by a police inspector.
[Pause. HOLMES too looks into the wings from whence the policeman will enter. Nothing. The penny drops for WATSON who moves to the dead Mormon and whispers "You're on". MORIARTY twigs and quickly rises]

MOR'ITY *[As Mormon]* Thanks Doc. *[Dashes offstage, collects hat then re-enters. Aside]* It's a very small cast.

HOLMES *[Addressing LESTRADE]* Ah, Inspector Lestrade.

MOR'ITY *[As LESTRADE]* Mr Holmes, another Mormon has been murdered.

WATSON Two bodies!

HOLMES Watson, it's time for the flashback! *[HOLMES and MORIARTY exit. HUDSON enters]*

FX *Country and western music suggesting tumbling tumbleweeds begins*

WATSON *[Storyteller moves to one side as narrator]* Let us travel to the deserts of America where coyotes howl ... *[HUDSON gives mournful wail]* and Mormons marry.

HUDSON *[As an American spruiking]* Come on down to Salt Lake City, folks. Seven brides for seven ... *[Correcting herself]* Make that seven brides for *one* brother.

WATSON A man and a young girl were lost in the desert. *[Enter MORIARTY and ADLER as JOHN FERRIER and LUCY]* Death was near when miraculously they met some meandering Mormons. *[MUSIC fades if not already]*

HUDSON *[American]* Food and water over here, folks.
[MORIARTY and ADLER go to HUDSON and are made welcome]

WATSON Many years went by and little Lucy grew into a beautiful woman. *[LUCY parades]*
She met her hero, Jefferson Hope, and they fell in love. *[LUCY swoon/ blows kisses]*

OTHERS *[Sigh as in ain't she sweet]* Ahhhh.

WATSON But two nasty Mormons fancied Lucy for their harems. To escape the evil men, Jefferson helped Lucy and her step-father to flee ... *[MORIARTY and LUCY tippy-toe upstage towards HUDSON]* but the murderous Mormons had other ideas.

HUDSON *[Fires imaginary gun]* Bang! *[FERRIER is shot and falls dead]*

ADLER *[Melodramatic]* Step-father!

WATSON Those brutal baddies shot the step-father and kidnapped Lucy. *[MORIARTY exits]*

ADLER *[Screams miming being grabbed by the baddies]* Help! Let me go! Help! *[Continues]*

WATSON *[Whispers]* Get off! Get off! *[LUCY gets the message and exits still screaming]* Lucy's lover, Jefferson Hope, was distraught as his darling girl died of a broken-heart. Jefferson swore revenge on the murderous Mormons.
[LIGHTING closes to restricted area which is the fireplace at 221B. HOLMES enters. HUDSON enters with chair talking as she goes even if in darkness]

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HUDSON *[Announcing]* And now let's visit the famous Baker Street home of the world's greatest consulting detective and his friend, Doctor Watson; your chair, Doctor.

WATSON *[Moving to small lit area and sits]* Thank you Mrs Hudson.

HUDSON And gentlemen, please don't take all night. We're still on the first story. *[Exits]*

HOLMES So, Watson, a brief summary if you please.

WATSON For years Jefferson tracked the Mormons who stole his Lucy. Across America to Russia, Paris, Copenhagen and now London where you, Holmes, discovered that *[Slower with emphasis, crescendo]* both Mormons were murdered by ...

HOLMES *[Indicating imaginary door]* Mr Jefferson Hope.

MOR'ITY *[Enters as HOPE]* Gentlemen. I wish to confess.

WATSON *[Offering HOPE his chair]* Sit man, you look ill enough to die.

MOR'ITY *[Sits, upset]* Well so would you. *[Counts on fingers]* I was poisoned in the house, shot in the desert and now I'm about to have a heart attack. Not happy, Doc!

WATSON Holmes, you should publish an account of this case. If you won't, I will.

HOLMES You may do as you like, Doctor, but remember there are still fifty-nine to go.

TRIO *[Facing front, aghast]* Fifty-nine!

[BLACKOUT. MORIARTY exits. HOLMES sits and WATSON stands nearby in darkness]

HUDSON *[Solo light]* At last we get to the second mystery – *The Sign of Four*.

FX *Solo violin music*
[This music is used at different times to establish the setting of the sitting-room at 221B Baker Street. Lights up slowly. Concentrate on the men in Baker Street sitting-room where HOLMES, mimes taking drugs and WATSON unhappily observes. Music fades after about 15 seconds]

HUDSON Now I'm a respectable housekeeper but some of the things going on under my roof *[Tut-tuts, shakes head and exits. Solo spot fades]*

WATSON Which is it today, Holmes, morphine or cocaine?

HOLMES Cocaine. Would you care to try some?

WATSON Indeed not! But tell me, have you a new case?

HOLMES None, hence the cocaine. I cannot live without brainwork.

HUDSON *[Enters]* A visitor, Mr Holmes – a Miss Mary Morstan.
[HUDSON exits, HOLMES adjusts his clothing and he and WATSON are standing]

MORSTAN *[MORSTAN played by ADLER enters. She is young and, according to WATSON, an absolute stunner]* Gentlemen, I have lost my father.

WATSON *[Starting to leave]* I'll leave you two alone.

MORSTAN *[Stopping WATSON]* No, sir. *[To HOLMES]* I would like your friend to stay.

WATSON *[Chuffed]* Oh really? I say, jolly good. *[Offers his seat to MARY who sits]*

HOLMES So Miss Morstan, when did you lose your father?

MORSTAN Ten years ago he went out one night and never came back.

HOLMES Tell me of his friends.

MORSTAN Only one; a Major Sholto, father of twin boys.

HOLMES This is a singular case.

MORSTAN Six years ago I received a valuable pearl and have done so every year since.
[MARY indicates pearls at her throat. WATSON inspects]

WATSON They are the finest pearls *[Soppy, romantic]* worn by the finest woman.

HOLMES *[Peeved]* Yes, all right, Watson.

MORSTAN *[Gives WATSON eye-fluttering look then back to business, mimes handing letter to HOLMES]*
I received this strange letter today.

HOLMES *[Mimes reading]* Be outside the Lyceum Theatre at 7 o'clock with two friends.

WATSON *[Excited]* Two friends! Holmes, that could be us.

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HOLMES Let us follow the instructions and meet a coachman who will drive us to a strange house in South London. *[HOLMES moves to one side followed by the others]*

WATSON *[MORSTAN takes his arm]* May I tell you tales from Afghanistan?

MORSTAN Oh please do.

HOLMES And here we are.

MORSTAN *[The lovers have their ardor dampened]* Oh.

WATSON *[Looking around]* Goodness, it's very dark.
[Instant lighting change to eerie glow. MORIARTY enters as SHOLTO who is 30, bald with red hair, nervy and speaks with a high-pitched voice]

SHOLTO Your servant, Miss Morstan. I am Thaddeus Sholto.

MORSTAN You know of my father, Captain Morstan?

SHOLTO Our fathers served in the army but sadly both now are dead.

MORSTAN *[Saddened]* I knew it. *[WATSON comforts her]*

SHOLTO Ten years ago our fathers argued, Captain Morstan had a seizure and struck his head on a treasure-chest.

TRIO Treasure-chest!

SHOLTO Our paters purloined a vast treasure which my father hid in his London home. Part of this treasure was for Captain Morstan's daughter.
[WATSON and MORSTAN react]

MORSTAN *[Shocked]* But I'll be the richest woman in Britain.

WATSON *[Love-struck]* And still the prettiest. *[HOLMES rolls his eyes]*

SHOLTO But the treasure was hidden until yesterday when

OTHERS Yes?

SHOLTO We found it! *[Reaction]*

HOLMES Then let us away to the jewels.
[They move to other side of stage. SHOLTO crosses OTHERS who now face the other way]

WATSON *[Pleased as they cross]* During which I can tell more tales of

SHOLTO *[Indicating imaginary house]* Pondicherry Lodge.

MORSTAN *[Looking around]* Oh, it's beautiful in the moon light.
[Instant lighting change to moonlit night]

HUDSON *[Offstage gives shrill, sad, pitiful whimper of a frightened woman. WATSON takes MORSTAN'S hand]*

SHOLTO That's the housekeeper. You can't get the staff, you know. *[Exits]*

HOLMES Watson, you're holding Miss Morstan's hand.

WATSON *[Poetic at MORSTAN]* I know, Holmes. It must be love. *[MORSTAN exits]*

SHOLTO *[Enters terrified, blubbing and sits]* There is something amiss with my twin brother Bartholomew. Come and look through the keyhole.
[SHOLTO sits on chair C. HOLMES and WATSON are either side of SHOLTO and bend facing one another as if looking through a keyhole. Suddenly a bright overhead light shines on SHOLTO – who is now his twin brother BARTHOLOMEW – and HOLMES and WATSON recoil in horror as SHOLTO is revealed with a horrible, fixed smile]

WATSON Why it's ...

TRIO *[Even the dead can speak]* Bartholomew Sholto.

HOLMES Note his twisted limbs.

WATSON He's been dead for hours.

HOLMES *[Emphatic]* Twisted limbs. *[SHOLTO twists. HOLMES indicates imaginary note]* And this note is important.

WATSON *[Reading imaginary note]* The sign of the four.

HOLMES *[Pointing to SHOLTO'S ear]* And here; a poisoned dart.
[SHOLTO comes alive and leaps up]

WATSON *[Stunned]* My God! He's alive.

HOLMES No, that's his twin brother, Thaddeus.

SHOLTO *[Thaddeus again; hysterical]* The treasure is gone, my brother is dead and the police will blame me! Oh, I know I'll go mad! *[Exiting with chair, convulsing]*

HOLMES *[Exiting]* I'll investigate the crime-scene Watson and you ...

WATSON Of course, Holmes. *[Announcement a la BBC]* It's time for the flashback.

FX *Indian music lasting only a few seconds.*
[Lighting to one spot for WATSON who steps into the spot and narrates]

WATSON A wealthy rajah in India was robbed by three Sikhs and an Englishman with a wooden leg – *[Indicating]* Mister Jonathan Small.

SMALL *[MORIARTY enters as SMALL with a sailor's cap and a wooden leg and stands in new spot of light]* Us four thieves was sent to jail but told no-one about our stolen treasure.

WATSON The men in charge of the prison were Major Sholto and Captain Morstan.

SMALL I told *them* about the treasure on condition they got me outa jail. *[Fade MUSIC]*

WATSON But Sholto double-crossed them and took the treasure to England where Morstan tracked him down, argued and died *[Emotional]* leaving my dear, sweet Mary *[Blubbers]* an or-phan.

SMALL *[Catches the pathos. Distressed]* Did, did, did you say an or-phan?

WATSON *[Crying, nodding]* Yes, a beautiful, pearl-encrusted or-phan. *[The men blubber]*

HUDSON *[Calling roughly from offstage]* Get on with it.

SMALL *[Suddenly back as before]* I escaped and years later came to England where my little native friend Tonga *[ADLER enters as midget black native. Costuming may prove interesting here]* fired his blowpipe at Bartholomew Sholto.

FX *Nautical music – Drunken Sailor begins and continues through river chase*

WATSON *[Crank up the speed]* Small and Tonga grabbed the treasure, *[TONGA mimes grabbing treasure and lines up beside SMALL who pretends to steer their imaginary boat]* jumped aboard a fast boat and raced down the Thames to freedom.
[Lights change to eerie light and we are now on the Thames. SMALL and TONGA are on one boat and HOLMES and WATSON board another]

HOLMES *[Enters wearing sea-captain's cap. WATSON leaps aboard]* Come Watson, chase them, full speed ahead. *[HOLMES and SMALL steer their respective boats]*

SMALL *[Calling as he steers his boat]* We're too fast, Mr Holmes. You'll never catch us!

HOLMES *[Calling and steering]* Heap it on stokers. Burn the boat if you must!

SMALL Shoot them, Tonga! Use your blowpipe! *[TONGA prepares to fire imaginary dart]*

WATSON Look! The native has a poisoned dart.

HOLMES Fire, Watson! *[TONGA takes aim]*

WATSON *[Aims imaginary pistol]* Bang! *[TONGA screams, falls overboard and exits]*

SMALL You'll never take me alive. I'll run aground. *[FADE MUSIC]*
[SMALL hops off boat but his wooden leg sticks in the mud. He is furious]

HOLMES His wooden leg is stuck in the mud. Quickly Watson, save the treasure!
[WATSON leaps onto other imaginary boat and searches]

WATSON It's gone!

SMALL You're too late. The gems are in the Thames.
[Hysterical laugh from SMALL who exits. HOLMES is joined by WATSON. Peaceful]

WATSON Well Holmes, not only did we lose the treasure, I fear you've lost your partner.

HOLMES *[Upset]* Watson, no, I am nothing without my Boswell.

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WATSON Three's a crowd, old man and Miss Morstan and I are soon to wed.
HOLMES Then good luck, Doctor. But I should never marry lest I bias my judgment.
WATSON Life seems unfair, Holmes. The police get the credit, I get the girl and you ...
HOLMES I get the cocaine.
[BLACKOUT. WATSON exits. HOLMES moves to study]

FX *Violin music for 221B*

HUDSON *[Enters 221B and lights come up there. Annoyed]* Mr Holmes? *[Louder]* Mr Holmes?
HOLMES *[Peeved wanders into light in 221B]* What is it now, Mrs Hudson?
HUDSON Dr Watson is married and your next case is *A Scandal in Bohemia*. *[WATSON enters. HUDSON exiting speaks to WATSON about HOLMES]* Tell him he needs the love of a good woman. *[Exits. MUSIC FADES]*

WATSON *[Briefly confused at HUDSON'S advice]* I was passing, Holmes and saw your light.
HOLMES *[Greeting his long-lost chum]* Watson, I say, wedlock suits you.
WATSON Thank you, old chap, but have you a new case?
HOLMES Indeed I do and it involves the aristocracy *[Indicates door]* from Europe.
KRAMM *[MORIARTY as Bohemian nobleman wearing a mask and/or cape. He is 30, solid, tall and beautifully dressed enters. German accent]* Gentlemen, I have ein terrible German accent und meine Name ist Count Von Kramm.
HOLMES I know who you are ... *[Slight bow]* your Majesty.
WATSON *[Shocked]* The King!
KRAMM *[Removes mask]* Ja, I am za Kink *[sic]* und soon to marry but I fear za former lover.
HOLMES A beautiful woman threatens to tell all. *[WATSON fumbles for imaginary notepad]*
KRAMM Za stunning Irene Adler ist ein [h]opera-singer here in London. She vill ein photograph send of za two of us to my new fiancée, a Scandinavian princess.
WATSON *[Is lost]* What came after "terrible German accent"?
HOLMES And you have searched Miss Adler's house?
KRAMM High und low but za photograph ist nowhere found to be. Bitte, Herr Holmes; find zat photograph. *[KRAMM and HOLMES exchange bows. KRAMM exits]*

HOLMES *[HOLMES beckons to WATSON who moves closer]* Watson, here is the plan.
[HOLMES whispers in WATSON'S ear]

WATSON *[Surprised and not a whisper]* A smoke-bomb?
HOLMES Shhh, the audience may be listening. *[Lights up as ADLER enters]* Look, there is the beautiful Miss Adler. Quick, Watson, strike me.
WATSON Righto. *[WATSON mimes punching HOLMES by miming a punch out front]* Biff!
[HOLMES staggers and half-collapses towards ADLER who moves to him]

ADLER *[Distressed]* Oh sir, you are hurt. Please, come into my house.
[HOLMES follows ADLER "inside" then waves to WATSON]

HOLMES *[Unsubtle whisper]* Now Watson!
WATSON *[Aside to audience]* That's my cue for the imaginary smoke-bomb.
[WATSON mimes tossing smoke-bomb]

HOLMES *[Hopping about, pointing, calling]* Fire! Fire! *[Continues]*
ADLER *[Panics then aside to audience]* Oh I must save the photograph of the King and I.
[ADLER mimes finding photo and exits. WATSON joins HOLMES]

WATSON *[Gushing]* Holmes, what a stroke of genius.
HOLMES When a woman thinks her house is on fire, her instinct is to save the thing she values most.

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HUDSON *[Enters and dusts chair. MEN move to either side looking for the source of the voice. MORIARTY enters and sits]* Gentlemen, enough chit-chat. We're up to case number four, *The Red Headed League* which begins when Mr Jabez Wilson comes to Baker Street. *[Pause. Points]* Oi! It's over here.
[HOLMES and WATSON turn and move back into 221B. HUDSON exits. WILSON is stout, elderly, pompous, slow and florid-faced with red hair]

HOLMES Ah, Mr Wilson. Tell us your fascinating story.

WILSON I answered a job advertisement for red-headed men. I was paid four pounds a week to copy the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. I worked between 10 and 2 every day and my assistant looked after my shop.

WATSON What a fine fellow.

WILSON But now the *Red-Headed League* is no more.

HOLMES An intriguing case, sir. Please allow us to investigate.

WILSON *[Taken aback]* But I've hardly given you any information.

WATSON It's our housekeeper; she wants us to get a move on.

WILSON *[Stands]* Oh, right you are. Well, good-day, gentlemen. *[Exits]*

HOLMES Now Watson, let us journey to the scene of the crime.
[Men move downstage to darkness. ADLER as maid with second chair and HUDSON as herself enter]

HUDSON *[Sitting. Weary]* Come and take the weight off, Missy.

ADLER *[As maid, sitting]* Ooo Mrs 'udson, do you fink we should?

HUDSON Dr Watson took his army revolver so they'll be gone for hours.

ADLER *[Shocked]* 'is revolver! Should we call the police?

HUDSON Shhh. *[Whispers]* We're upstaging the other actors. *[Indicating]*
[Lights dim on women but come up a little where HOLMES, WATSON and MERRYWEATHER – a bank official played by MORIARTY – are in position. The women turn and observe. The men whisper]

HOLMES Are we inside the bank vault, Mr Merryweather?

M'W'THER We are Mr Holmes and it's packed with gold bullion.

WATSON And this bank is located beside the shop owned by Jabez Wilson.

HOLMES Excellent scene-stting, Watson; now, let us wait quietly in the dark.

HUDSON *[Pause. Suddenly sees workman's cap she is holding. Stressed]* Oh my lord!

ADLER *[Worried]* Mrs 'udson. Wot's the matter?

HUDSON We're playing the bank robbers.
[Women noisily scurry towards the men. Kill lights on women]

HOLMES *[Still whispering]* Have your revolver ready, Watson.
[HUDSON slowly appears behind WATSON]

WATSON Righto. *[Nervous]* I say, Holmes ... *[MUSIC BEGINS]*

HOLMES What now?

Song Number 3 There's Someone Here

WATSON *I think there's someone here*
WOMEN *They think there's someone here*
QUINTET *We think there's someone here.*

HOLMES That'll be Mrs Hudson and the maid playing the bank robbers.
[Scream from robbers] It's no use, John Clay. Give up! *[Scuffle as robbers are caught]*

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HUDSON *[As criminal]* Orright, guv'nor. It's a fair cop.

M'WTHER The police will take them now. This way.
[Women and MERRYWEATHER exit. HOLMES and WATSON move C as lights come up]

FX *Solo violin music begins and fades after about 15 seconds*

WATSON Simply amazing Holmes. How ever did you solve that mystery?

HOLMES It was Wilson's assistant. He was very keen for his employer to attend the phony Red-Headed League.

WATSON Yes but why?

HOLMES Once alone, the shop assistant could tunnel into the bank next door.

WATSON But how did you know the assistant was digging?

HOLMES Scruffy knees, Watson. One should always look at the trousers.

WATSON You astound me, Holmes. Your powers of deduction are simply brilliant.

HUDSON *[Enters]* Gentlemen, it's time for number five – *A Case of Identity*. *[HUDSON weary – throwaway line as she arranges/dusts chair]* As if anyone cares.

HOLMES Mrs Hudson, do I detect a wearisome tone in your voice?

HUDSON *[Thinly veiled sarcasm]* Oh very observant, Mr Holmes. Perhaps it's due to me getting all the crappy jobs.

WATSON *[Mild rebuke]* Language, Mrs Hudson.

HUDSON *[Complaining]* Answer the door, tidy the mess, fetch your supper – I'm even doing the bloody play introductions - and there's you, smoking revolting tobacco, snorting coke and entertaining every weirdo in London.

HOLMES *[To WATSON]* You haven't made mention of her 'strange behaviour' in your writings?

WATSON Wouldn't dream of it, old man.

HOLMES Good show. *[To HUDSON]* Right you are, Mrs H. Send in the next weirdo.

HUDSON *[Still not pleased]* Miss Mary Sutherland.
[HUDSON exits with one chair. ADLER enters as another Mary – this time SUTHERLAND - young spinster, large woman, wearing heavy fur boa, wide brimmed-hat with large red feather, hat tilted, gloves, wearing odd boots. She is shown to a chair]

S'LAND Gentlemen, I have lost my fiancé.

WATSON That's remarkable. We had another Mary before only she'd lost her father.

HOLMES The facts, Miss Sutherland.

S'LAND I live with my mother and stepfather who is almost my age. I became engaged to Mr. Hosmer Angel but on the day of our marriage, my fiancé vanished.

HOLMES Tell me about your young man.

S'LAND He is shy, prefers to walk in the evening, has swollen glands, speaks in a whisper and wears tinted glasses.

HOLMES And what do your parents think of your fiancé?

S'LAND Mother is all in favour and told me not to worry about my step-father.

WATSON But what happened on your wedding day?

S'LAND Mother and I travelled in the first cab with Hosmer in the second. At the church we discovered the second cab was empty and I've never seen my beloved since.

HOLMES Miss Sutherland, you have been shamefully treated.

S'LAND *[Emotional]* Oh Mr Holmes, you are very kind. *[Stands]* Goodbye. *[She exits]*

HOLMES I shall write to the step-father. *[Hears sound]* That was quick. He's here already.
[WINDIBANKS played by MORIARTY enters. He is 30, sturdy, clean-shaven, with a bland insinuating manner]

W'BANKS Forgive my step-daughter, Mr Holmes. I don't like our dirty linen being washed in public. Besides, you'll never find Hosmer Angel.

HOLMES But I have already.

W'BANKS *[Distressed]* What! Where?

HOLMES Oh it won't do, *Hosmer*, really it won't.

WATSON *[Has no idea]* Who's Hosmer?

W'BANKS *[Collapses in chair. The game is up. Groans]* It all began as a joke.

WATSON What joke?

HOLMES You pretended to be your step-daughter's suitor.

WATSON *[Stunned]* I say!

W'BANKS *[Recovering]* I have done nothing wrong and if you keep me here, you lay yourself open to an action for illegal restraint.

HOLMES *[Stepping aside]* I ought to lay a whip across your shoulders. By Jove! *[Looks upstage]* And here's a hunting-crop to do just that.
[HOLMES moves to whip, WINDIBANKS flees in fear and bumps into HUDSON offstage]

HUDSON *[Offstage]* Oi! *[Enters wearing an Australian hat with dangling corks]* You have some very strange visitors, Mr Holmes. *[And she's one of them]*

HOLMES *[Referring to HUDSON]* Strange indeed, Mrs Hudson. *[To WATSON]* Come Watson, what is different about our house-keeper?

WATSON *[Can't see the bleeding obvious]* Ah, she's ... not wearing gloves. No, she ... she has a new apron!

HUDSON *[Collecting HOLMES]* Come Mr Holmes. We'll leave Dr Watson to chat with his new wife while we get on with the next case.
[HOLMES crosses HUDSON and exits calling "Coo-ee"]

HUDSON *[Just before she exits]* *The Boscombe Valley Mystery.*
[She and HOLMES exit. We're in the home of Doctor Watson. He is seated reading the paper. ADLER, as the new Mrs Watson, enters wearing an apron and attends to her husband]

MRS W Well John, this makes a nice change.

WATSON *[Half reading]* I'm sorry my dear?

MRS W Most of your cases begin at Baker Street with you and Mr Holmes having a chat.

WATSON How observant you are and how nice to enjoy breakfast with my lovely wife.

MRS W So is Mr Holmes working on a new case?

WATSON I'm sure he ... *[Looking upstage as lights come up]* Good heavens, there he is.

HOLMES *[Enters, waving, calls]* Watson, hello!

WATSON *[Calling]* Holmes, you seem far away.

HOLMES I'm in the west country. Have you a couple of days to spare?

MRS W I think the change would do you good, my dear.

WATSON *[Standing]* Then off to the west country I'll go.
[WATSON kisses wife who exits. HOLMES moves down and WATSON crosses to him]

HOLMES It's murder, Watson. The victim was Charles McCarthy who made his money in Australia. *[Calling to wings]* Could we have the body please? *[To WATSON]* Chair, Watson. *[WATSON moves or stands beside chair]*

HUDSON *[Enters wearing bush hat with corks and is not happy]* Well, where do you want me?

HOLMES *[Indicates chair]* Just there. *[HUDSON sits]*

WATSON *[To HUDSON]* I hope you're comfortable, sir.

HOLMES Now the unfortunate Mr McCarthy has a fractured skull.

HUDSON *[Sarcastic]* Charming.

HOLMES And the police have arrested his son.

HUDSON [*Scoffs*] He didn't do it.

HOLMES [*Unhappy with her comments*] Thank you, Mrs Hudson.

WATSON What does the son have to say?

HUDSON [*Spoken quickly*] *Coo-ee* and - a rat.

HOLMES [*Annoyed*] Mrs Hudson, please.

HUDSON Look there's another fifty plus cases to get through so why not cut to the chase?

WATSON Mr McCarthy's right, Holmes. Let's just have your brilliant explanation.

TURNER [*MORIARTY enters as elderly John TURNER with Australian accent*] Allow me. I'm John Turner and I'm responsible for murdering this [*Pointing at HUDSON and spits venom*] bootlegging, blackmailing blackguard.

WATSON [*Defensive*] How dare you sir.

TURNER In Australia I became a bushranger and [*Moving to HUDSON*] held up a gold convoy. [*Uses his finger as a gun*] I placed my pistol at the head of the driver [*Puts finger to HUDSON'S head*] – this vile creature.

HUDSON I wish you had shot me. At least then I wouldn't be wearing this ridiculous hat.

TURNER Back in London, McCarthy clocked me and the blackmail began. I paid 'till he asked for what I could not give – my daughter.

HOLMES But why confess now?

TURNER Because I'm dying and I cannot allow his innocent son to suffer.

WATSON And the words *Coo-ee* and *a rat*?

TURNER *Coo-ee* is an Australian greeting.

HUDSON And *a rat* is short for *Ball-arat* where we met in the Aussie goldfields; now can we please get on?

TURNER [*To HOLMES*] What do you intend to do, Mr Holmes?

HOLMES In view of your health, nothing.

TURNER Ah, beautie. Then thank you and hoo roo. [*Assists HUDSON by taking her chair*] Come on, McCarthy. [*They exit talking*]

HUDSON [*Doesn't like him*] Don't you touch me.

TURNER Look I'm sorry I had to kill you.

HUDSON It's a bit late for sorry. [*They're gone*]

HOLMES Watson, London is calling.

WATSON [*HOLMES and WATSON head to 221B*] Then back to Baker Street we go. [*Lights up in 221B and fade on detectives*]

O'SHAW [*ADLER enters as John Openshaw, 22, well-groomed, refined*] Mr Holmes, I am John Openshaw. One day my uncle opened a letter and nearly died. It had five orange pips.

WATSON This must be the case of *The Five Orange Pips*.

ELIAS [*MORIARTY bursts in distraught as the elderly, drunken ELIAS and acts alone away from the others. He shrieks*] Ahhhh! It's the K.K.K!

O'SHAW Insanity came upon my uncle. He would rush into the garden.

ELIAS [*Hystreical*] I am not afraid of any man. [*ELIAS screams and exits*]

O'SHAW One night he fell in a pond and drowned.

HOLMES A remarkable story. Continue.

O'SHAW Then my *father* opened a letter containing five orange pips and *he* died. Now a third letter has arrived with five orange pips and the letters K.K.K.

HOLMES [*Anxious*] So tell me, what have you done?

O'SHAW I told the police but all they did was laugh.
HOLMES *[Shaking clenched fists]* Incredible imbecility!
O'SHAW But Mr Holmes, what should I do?
HOLMES *[Serious concern]* Follow their instructions. Now go man, go!
O'SHAW *[Taking flight]* Thank you, sir. Good night. *[Exits]*
HOLMES Watson, this case is fantastic.
WATSON Indeed so, Holmes, but I haven't the foggiest.
HOLMES Have you never heard of ... *[Lowers voice]* the Ku Klux Klan?
WATSON I have and tomorrow's newspaper brings terrible news. *[Announcing]* "John Openshaw drowned near Waterloo Bridge."
HOLMES *[Saddened]* Oh Watson, he came to me for help and I sent him away to his death.
HUDSON *[Enters]* Excuse me gentlemen. This story has run overtime and what with Mr Holmes being a cry-baby, perhaps I could deliver the denouement.
[Upset HOLMES just nods]
WATSON That's jolly decent of you, Mrs Hudson.
HUDSON *[Storyteller]* So the Ku Klux Klan geezers who murdered the uncle, father and son, sailed back to America but the ship sank and all the baddies died the end *[sic]*. And now, *[Announcing]* *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*. *[She starts to exit but stops]* Oh, and Merry Christmas gentlemen.
FX *Christmas music begins and finishes after about 15 seconds*
[HOLMES and WATSON brighten]
WATSON Merry Christmas, Holmes. And what is your latest case?
HOLMES A battered hat, Watson, tells us so much.
WATSON You know, we haven't had a flashback for a while. May I?
HOLMES By all means. *[MUSIC fades, single light only, fade lights elsewhere]*
WATSON *[As storyteller]* A young thief stole a valuable jewel called the Blue Carbuncle and took it to his sister's house where she made geese fat for Christmas.
HUDSON *[Enters and is lit. She is not amused]* A group of geese is known as a gaggle.
WATSON The sister promised her thieving sibling one free goose.
HUDSON *[HUDSON flaps elbows as goose]* Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat.
WATSON The jewel-thief chose his goose – a fine, plump bird ripe for the plucking.
HUDSON *[Sarcastic, flapping wings]* Yes, it's me, I'm part of the gaggle, gaggle, gaggle.
WATSON The thief grabbed the goose *[HUDSON reacts as if being grabbed]* and thrust the jewel down its throat.
HUDSON *[As if the stone is in her throat]* Goggle, goggle, goggle, *[Stops struggling or guggling]* or, if you're on-line it's Google, Google, Google.
WATSON The thief departed and a Mr Henry Baker arrived.
BAKER *[MORIARTY enters as Henry BAKER moving in close to HUDSON]* I fancy this goose. At home, I'll give her a really good stuffing.
HUDSON *[Aside]* Men get all the best parts.
WATSON *[BAKER escorts HUDSON around the stage]* So Mr Baker walked home with his new goose but was *[Quicker]* suddenly attacked by thugs.
[BAKER yells in fright as he mimes being attacked and HUDSON – who technically is dead – flaps her wings and flies away. Two following lines are spoken ad lib and simultaneously]
HUDSON Gaggle, gaggle, gaggle! *[Exits]*
BAKER Get off! You rotters! Begone! *[Exits]*
[Lights up back at 221B. WATSON returns to the fireside]
HOLMES And so Mr. Baker's lost hat and goose were brought here to Baker Street.

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WATSON Giving your observation skills a chance to shine.

HOLMES The man who owns this hat once was rich but now is poor, has just had a haircut, wears lime-scented hair-crème and hasn't got the gas connected to his house.

WATSON Amazing, Holmes. No-one can hold a *candle* to you.

HOLMES The thief begged for forgiveness and, in order to save a soul, I let him go.

WATSON *[Clapping]* Bravo.
[BLACKOUT. HOLMES and WATSON exit. ADLER enters]

HUDSON *[Steps into her solo light]* And now for another animal story where I change from a goose to a baboon in *[Dramatic]* *The Adventure of the Speckled Band.*
[HUDSON exits. Her light fades. Bring up lights at 221B. ADLER as HELEN STONER is alone in the room. She is young, attractive, dressed all in black including a veil. She is nervous and pacing the room]

HOLMES *[Enters followed by WATSON. Cheerily]* Good morning, young lady. I observe you are shivering.

STONER It is not the cold, sir. It is fear. It is terror.

HOLMES Please be seated. *[STONER sits and could lift veil]*

STONER My name is Helen Stoner and I live with my drunken step-father who has a pet baboon.

HOLMES And what of your family?

STONER Two years ago, just before her wedding, my sister died suddenly. She gave a terrible scream and said, "It was the speckled band!"

HOLMES Was she poisoned?

STONER The doctors found nothing.

WATSON But that was two years ago.

STONER And now *I* am to be married and because of renovations, am sleeping in the room where my sister met her horrible death.

HOLMES We shall visit your house tonight.

STONER *[Standing]* Oh sir, my heart is lightened already. *[Replaces veil?]* Goodbye. *[Exits]*

HOLMES Come Watson, we will hide and observe. *[They move DC. Kill lights on 221B]*

WATSON It's quite dark here in the garden.
[Sudden light change to very dim]

FX *Night sounds – an owl, insects, etc*

HOLMES *[Pointing out front]* Look! There is our signal.
[They crouch/kneel peering into the night looking over the audience. Suddenly HUDSON, wearing a gorilla mask, bounds in making strange sounds and pauses beside WATSON]

WATSON *[Whispers]* My God, Holmes. I swear I just saw Mrs Hudson.

HOLMES *[Still looking out front]* That was the baboon.

HUDSON *[Behind WATSON. Threatening]* And if you say, "What's the difference?" you're dead. *[HUDSON bounds off. Fade FX]*

HOLMES Come Watson, into Miss Stoner's bedroom. *[HOLMES starts to move]*

WATSON Stop! *[Stopping HOLMES]* I can't, Holmes. I'm a married man.

HOLMES Oh come now, Doctor. This is Victorian England. It's every married man's duty to have a mistress.

WATSON Oh, all right. *[Mimes climbing into room with HOLMES]* But the room is empty.

HOLMES And ready for death. *[Snaps]* Quiet. *[Pause. Suddenly HOLMES starts thrashing an imaginary snake. Yelling]* You see it, Watson? You see it? *[Stops thrashing]*

WATSON No but I can hear that scream.

MOR'ITY *[As wicked step-father, offstage, gives horrible cry of pain before death]*
HOLMES It's over, Watson. The stepfather sent the deadly snake to kill his stepdaughters to control their money. *[MORIARTY enters in the darkness and sits C]*

WATSON And you drove the snake back where it killed the stepfather.
HUDSON *[Enters and is lit]* Oh Doctor, there's a bandaged bloke in your surgery. *[HOLMES and HUDSON exit]*

WATSON Ah, it must be time for *The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb*.
[Lights up on 221B. MORIARTY is seated there. WATSON enters 221B which is now his surgery. MORIARTY is Victor Hatherley, 25, engineer, tweed suit with right hand heavily bandaged and is seated and anxious]

VICTOR Doctor, I had an accident during the night.
WATSON Good heavens! *[Examines bandaged hand and attends to it during following speeches]*

VICTOR A man offered me fifty guineas to repair a machine.
WATSON And I must repair your hand.
VICTOR I did the work but found the people were forgers.
WATSON Criminals?
VICTOR I tried to flee and was hanging from an upstairs window when I was struck with a cleaver.
WATSON *[Horrified]* You horrify me.
VICTOR I jumped but parted company with
WATSON Yes, yes. No need for the gory details.
VICTOR But now I wish to leave the task of exposing the criminals to Mr Holmes.
WATSON *[Finishes treatment]* I'm sorry but micro-surgery comes in the *next* century.
VICTOR Then thank you, sir and good-day. *[Exits as HUDSON enters]*
WATSON All done, Mrs Hudson; over to you.
HUDSON *[Excited]* That was brilliant, Doctor; the fastest story yet and you know why?
WATSON *[Shaking head]* No, sorry, not a clue.
HUDSON *[Intimate]* Mr Sherlock Bloody Holmes wasn't in it.
WATSON *[Correcting]* Well actually he was; I used the cleaver to make some judicious cuts.
HUDSON But can't you see, we'll finish early if we dump the detective.
WATSON *[Outraged]* Dump the detective!
HUDSON *[Knows she'll never win. Shaking head]* All right, all right, keep your shirt on. *[Grumbles and announces]* *The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor*. *[Exits]*
[HOLMES enters and joins WATSON at 221B]

FX *Solo violin music which fades after some 15 seconds*
HOLMES And you say, Watson "The bride simply vanished during the wedding breakfast"?

WATSON The husband, Lord Robert St Simon, has suffered a great deal.
HOLMES *[Turning]* And, right on cue, here is His Lordship.
[MORIARTY enters as SIMON, 41, pleasant, cultured, yellow gloves, top hat, white waistcoat]

SIMON A most painful matter, Mr Holmes. *[He sits]*
HOLMES Your runaway bride is American?
SIMON And extremely rich. As we walked down the aisle, Hatty dropped her bouquet which was picked up by a strange man.
HOLMES *[Thinking about ADLER]* I was once enchanted by an American woman.
SIMON *[Standing]* I could tell you more but apparently we're running late.
HOLMES We are, Lord Robert, but I will surely solve your problem.
SIMON Thank you, gentlemen. *[Exits]*

WATSON That was quick, Holmes. Mrs Hudson *will* be pleased.

HOLMES But I refuse to omit the epilogue. The flashback, please Doctor.

WATSON *[As narrator]* Years ago, the missing bride married an American who went to seek his fortune. Newspapers reported his death at the hands of Apache Indians and years later the widow married Lord Robert St Simon. Imagine how she felt walking down the aisle with her second husband when there in the church was husband number one.

HUDSON *[Enters]* Well done, gentlemen; short ‘n sweet, but please don’t allow these toffy visitors to drag out the cases.

WATSON Toffy visitors, dear lady?

HUDSON Well you’ve just had Lord So-and-So and now it’s a son of Queen ...

HOLMES and **WATSON** *[Loud]* Mrs Hudson!

HUDSON *[Shocked]* What now?

HOLMES Discretion, please.

WATSON We must respect the client’s privacy.

HUDSON *[Snorts with derision]* Well tell that to the geezer outside in ... *[Announcing]* *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet.*
[HUDSON exits and MORIARTY enters as Alexander Holder, 50, tall, portly, banker, black-frock-coat, grey trousers. He is puffing, twitching and highly distressed]

HOLDER *[Enters in a flap]* Gentlemen, God knows I have trouble!

HOLMES Pray compose yourself, sir.

HOLDER *[Deep breaths]* I am a banker and yesterday, a person with one of the highest, noblest and most exalted names in England asked me for an immediate loan of fifty thousand pounds.

WATSON *[Staggered]* Fifty thousand!

HOLDER *[Mops sweaty brow]* I know, but what could I say? The man is the Queen’s ...

HOLMES Stop! *[Pause]* No names.

HOLDER *[Acknowledges the need for secrecy]* Then the client offered security of one of the Empire’s most precious public possessions.

WATSON Not the crown with thirty-nine enormous jewels called beryls?

HOLDER *[Shocked]* How did you know that?

WATSON *[Matter of fact]* It’s the name of the case.

HOLDER *[Realises]* Right. *[Continues]* So I gave *[Waves hand]* what’s-’is-name fifty grand and took the crown home for safety. At two a.m. I awoke to discover my son holding the crown with three of its jewels missing.

WATSON *[Medico speaking]* Oh don’t worry, sir. Many young men have problems with their family jewels.

HOLDER I have lost my honour, the gems and my son. What shall I do?

HOLMES Your son is innocent and the jewels will be recovered.

HOLDER *[Thrilled but confused]* Really? But how?

WATSON Alas we do not have time to explain. Our housekeeper is cracking the whip

HOLDER *[Standing]* Oh, right you are. *[HOLDER exits]*

HUDSON *[Enters]* Well done gents but please keep it moving.

WATSON Relax Mrs Hudson, *[Proud]* we have reached the final case.

HUDSON *[Correcting WATSON]* The final case, Doctor, in the *first* collection.

WATSON *[WATSON stunned]* What?

HUDSON You’ve still got forty-eight to go.

MEN *[Shocked]* Forty-eight!

HUDSON And what is it with you middle-aged men and young women?

HOLMES Now, Watson, the fair sex is your department. *[WATSON is speechless]*

HUDSON So here is yet *another* young woman, Miss Violet Hunter. *[ADLER as Violet HUNTER enters]* Not yet. *[HUNTER exits. Announcing]* *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches.* *[HUDSON moves to door]* Right, you're on. *[HUNTER enters. She is young, plainly but neatly dressed with freckled face. HUDSON exits]*

HUNTER Sir, I've had a very strange experience.

HOLMES Pray be seated, Miss Hunter. *[She sits]*

HUNTER I was offered the position of governess at the most generous salary of one hundred pounds a year.

WATSON *[Impressed]* One hundred a year!

HUNTER I am to care for the couple's young son, wear a blue dress and cut my hair.

WATSON But your hair is luxuriant.

HUNTER I declined the position so now they offer one hundred and twenty and I have several bills outstanding. What do you advise, Mr Holmes?

HOLMES Take the position, Miss Hunter, but at any time, day or night, a telegram would bring me down to your help.

HUNTER *[Standing]* You are most kind. Goodbye gentlemen. *[Nods and exits]*

HUDSON *[Enters]* A telegram just arrived from Miss Hunter.

WATSON That was quick.

HUDSON It reads, "Do come! I am at my wit's end."

HOLMES *[Pointing to Hampshire out front]* Watson, Hampshire awaits. *[HUDSON exits and HOLMES and WATSON move DC. Major lighting comes up]*

WATSON *[Pointing at imaginary house]* So that is *Copper Beeches* the home of Mr and Mrs Rucastle, their small son and his governess, Miss Violet Hunter.

HOLMES Excellent scene-setting, Watson. Now, let us observe. *[They move to one side]* *[HUNTER enters with MORIARTY in the house where she lives and works. MORIARTY is RUCASTLE, 50, very stout, heavy chin, glasses on end of nose]*

RUCASTLE We are delighted you have become our governess, Miss Hunter.

HUNTER And you want me to wear a blue dress, cut my hair and laugh a lot.

RUCASTLE *[Offers chair]* We do indeed. Let's rehearse. *[HUNTER sits facing front]* It's important you are *seen* to be laughing. Now then. *[Goes into routine as music hall comic]* And the duck said to the salesman, "Just put it on my *bill*". *[HUNTER is amused]* "You say this chimney is free?" asked the customer. "Yes, sir, it's *on the house!*" *[HUNTER laughs]* "But where will I go to post my loaf of bread?" she cried. "Why, the *Toast Office!*" *[HUNTER laughs uproariously. Suddenly RUCASTLE stops being a comic and is worried]* There's a strange man outside. I must draw the blind! *[Goes upstage and mimes drawing the blind]*

WATSON *[Stage whisper]* What's happening, Holmes?

HOLMES *[Stage whisper]* Some very unpunny jokes.

RUCASTLE Now Miss Hunter, I want you to meet my ferocious hound, Bruno.

HUDSON *[Enters as pooch with bone in mouth]* Grrr, grr, woof, woof, grrr. *[HUNTER afraid]*

RUCASTLE I let Bruno loose at night and God help any trespasser. *[More barking/growling from HUDSON]* He only gets fed once a day; don't you Bruno?

HUDSON *[Removes bone, aside, deep voice]* Chance'd be a fine thing. *[As HUDSON]* Just keep it short. *[Exits with chair]*

HUNTER *[Defiant]* Sir, I know there's a locked room in your house.

RUCASTLE [*Upset, snaps*] Ah, photography is one of my hobbies.
HUNTER I believe Mr Sherlock Holmes will discover your adult daughter's a prisoner.
RUCASTLE [*Explodes*] Sherlock Holmes!
HUNTER [*Indicating*] And there he is!
RUCASTLE [*Furious*] Bruno, attack those trespassers. [*HUDSON enters and savages her owner*]
Not me! Them! [*Continues. RUCASTLE exits being "savaged" by BRUNO*]
HOLMES Miss Hunter, you are safe now.
HUNTER Oh thank you, Mr Holmes.
HOLMES Your summary, please Watson.
WATSON I defer to Miss Hunter.
HUNTER Well the dreadful Mr Rucastle survived the ferocious Bruno and the imprisoned daughter was set free to marry her young man.
WATSON Jolly good, first class. [*Looking around*] Now where is Mrs Hudson?
HUDSON [*Enters and moves to men*] I'm here trying to start the next case.
[*MORIARTY enters and joins the group*]
MOR'ITY And speaking of cases, did you know Holmes investigated almost a *thousand*?
ADLER [*Shocked*] A thousand!
WATSON But I only recorded about sixty.
MOR'ITY So we're not even halfway there.
[*MUSIC BEGINS*]
ADLER No wonder Mrs Hudson is worried.

Song Number 4 Cut To The Chase

HUDSON *We must cut to the chase*
QUINTET *We must cut to the chase*
We must cut to the chase.

HUDSON I have an idea. Let's speak fewer words only twice as fast. For instance, "Come, Watson, come. The game is afoot" would become ...
ADLER [*She understands the idea*] "Watson game afoot".
HUDSON It's Sherlockian shorthand.
WATSON [*Upset*] No, no, no. You can't rush my accounts. One should savour the brilliance of Holmes.
MOR'ITY [*Sneering*] Poppycock. The man is vastly overrated. [*Tension in the air*]
HOLMES I'll thank you, Moriarty, to keep a civil tongue in your head.
[*Dramatic pause. Mexican standoff. ADLER suddenly intervenes*]
ADLER [*Remembers*] Oh I almost forgot. There's a message from F.O.H.
WATSON [*Excited*] F.O.H.! Holmes, it's the Foreign Office Head here in London.
HOLMES No, Watson. It's the *Front of House* here in Clayton.*
[**Insert name of suburb in which play is being staged*]
ADLER The message is, "Kettle's boiled – supper's served".
HUDSON But Mr Holmes, you've still got a dozen cases before interval.
WATSON [*Upset*] Good heavens, Holmes, whatever shall we do?
MOR'ITY [*Taunts him*] Yes Mister Smug Detective, this is not one of your pathetic fictional cases. This is real life. There's no author to plot your every move. You're on y'own, Sherlock.
[*OTHERS look at HOLMES who pauses to think then steps forward*]

HOLMES *[Addressing audience]* Ladies and Gentlemen, your vote please on whether we continue with more of my brilliant adventures - in which case your coffee will be cold and the best bikkies bitten - or, should we retire forthwith for intermission? Those in favour of the former

MORIARTY *[At HOLMES]* Hang on, hang on. You're trying to rob me of my starring role.

HOLMES *[Looks with disdain and the person who interrupts]* I'm sorry. You are?

MORIARTY What about *my* story, *my* solo, *my* day in the sun?

WATSON He's right, you know, Holmes.

MORIARTY *[Defending his position]* This is my one chance to truly take centre-stage.

HUDSON We're wasting time.

MORIARTY *[Now angry at everyone]* You lot got the full treatment. Why can't I?

HOLMES Hmm. *[MUSIC BEGINS]* I can never resist a touch of the dramatic.

Song Number 5 Let's Go to Switzerland

HOLMES *Let's go to Switzerland*
MORIARTY *Let's go to Switzerland*
QUINTET *Let's go to Switzerland.*

HUDSON *[Announcing]* And now, *The Final Problem*.
[BLACKOUT. All exit except HOLMES and WATSON. Lights up C as the detectives converse]

HOLMES Watson, it's time to confront the Napoleon of crime.

WATSON *[Surprised]* Moriarty is French?
[MORIARTY as himself enters and stands slightly apart in half light]

HOLMES I was in my room today when who should call but Professor Moriarty.
[MORIARTY is lit spookily and WATSON is nervous between the two calm enemies]

MORIARTY It is a dangerous habit to finger loaded firearms in one's pocket

WATSON Said the criminal mastermind.

HOLMES "You're finished, Moriarty."

WATSON Replied my friend.

MORIARTY Stand clear or be trodden under foot

HOLMES Then he turned *[MORIARTY turns and exits]* and walked from the room.

WATSON Holmes, you must hide 'till the danger is past.

HOLMES No, Watson. Meet me at Victoria Station where I'll be disguised as an elderly Italian priest. *[Crosses behind WATSON]*

WATSON *[WATSON turns and sees a priest]* Father. Allow me to help you.

HOLMES It's me, Watson. We don't have time for the disguise.

WATSON *[Shocked]* Holmes! You startled me.

HOLMES Moriarty will track us through England and then to the Continent. He has murder on his mind.

FX *Yodelling sound*

WATSON *[Looking around]* What was that?

HOLMES *[Steps forward as he alights from imaginary first-class compartment]* Switzerland.
[Sunny outdoor lighting comes up]

WATSON *[Alighting and admiring scenery]* Oh how beautiful.

HOLMES *[Pointing]* And the spectacular Reichenbach Falls.
[They move forward and look up at the Falls]

WATSON *[Awestruck]* A terrifying place. The torrent plunges to an awful abyss.

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HOLMES This narrow path is treacherous. *[Turns and points]* Look! Professor Moriarty.
[MORIARTY enters followed by HUDSON and ADLER. The women could have boaters kept on with coloured material. Extra boaters are brought so all can don the headgear]

WATSON And with him the entire female chorus.

MOR'ITY *[Greeting]* Mr Holmes. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*

HOLMES *[Greeting]* Professor Moriarty.

MOR'ITY Do you come here often?

HOLMES Only in the jumping season.

MOR'ITY Then, sir, prepare to fly!

HOLMES Break a leg, fiend!

Song Number 6 Oh It's Swell to Swim in Switzerland

QUINTET *Oh it's swell to swim in Switzerland
In the famous Sherlock Show
You'd do well to swim in Switzerland
It's the fashion, don't you know?
First you climb up the mountain almost to the top
Leap for a landing of a belly flop
Oh it's swell to swim in Switzerland
In the famous Sherlock Show.
Dip your tootsies in the tide, test the water
With your bucket and your spade it's a snorter
What a scoop for an on-the-spot reporter
On the hikin' track, Reichenbach Falls
Oh it's swell to swim in Switzerland
In the famous Sherlock Show.
[Leaping from sheer rock]*

[During the dance break, the group enjoys a day out at the lake in sunny Switzerland. The men could remove their coat and boater. Mrs Hudson does a solo dance DC as chairs are brought on upstage facing one another. HOLMES and MORIARTY sit with WATSON as the second for his friend and ADLER an unlikely second for the evil professor. It's all light and happy at first but then in the second part of the dance music the lighting concentrates on the rivals as they rise and enact a boxing match. The chairs are whisked away. As the match seems to be reaching a climax, HUDSON steps between the pugilists holding both hands aloft as in a draw. The company comes forward to reprise the song. The musical tag sees HOLMES lurch forward appearing to lose his balance on the narrow path. MORIARTY looms large appearing to push HOLMES whilst WATSON appears from the other side trying to save his friend. The women come forward either side of the men and everyone screams as the music stops. BLACKOUT. Final musical tag plays as actors exit in darkness. Music tag ends and house lights come up]

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Song Number 7 Entr'acte

[As Entr'acte fades, house lights dim and curtain opens on an eerie moonlit night. Is there mist on the moor? There is thunder then driving rain. A hound howls over the rain. In the darkness, HUDSON enters on one side and WATSON the other]

FX *Fearful wail of hound over the rain*

HUDSON *[Solo light hits HUDSON who is Dr Mortimer]* “Mr Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound.” *[Removes hat and speaks as herself]* And no prizes for guessing who plays the pooch in ... *[Announcing]* *The Hound of the Baskervilles* *[Kill HUDSON'S spot. HUDSON exits and WATSON is lit]*

WATSON *[Narrator]* And so begins arguably the best-known and most-loved case of Mr Sherlock Holmes.

HOLMES *[Enters as lights come up]* Watson, I want *you* to investigate this case. *[Kill WATSON'S spot]*

WATSON *[Moves to HOLMES]* Me? On my own?

HOLMES Pack your pistol, depart for Devonshire and send me your sentences. Now what do we know so far?

WATSON *[Confident]* Ah, Sir Charles Baskerville died of fright and his nephew Sir Henry Baskerville has just arrived from America.

HOLMES Excellent. And what of the red herrings?

WATSON *[He's been studying them]* Well there's the beekeeper at Baskerville Mall.

HOLMES *Hall, Baskerville Hall.*

WATSON *[Carries on regardless]* A Mrs Butterfly who staples Barrymores.

HOLMES Mrs Barrymore's the housekeeper. Stapleton collects butterflies.

WATSON Her mother is a poisoner.

HOLMES Her brother is a prisoner.

WATSON *[Still thinks he's right]* And that's about it.

HOLMES Excellent. But remember Dr Mortimer has a cocker spaniel, Mr Frankland of Lafter Hall a telescope, his daughter Laura is a typist with freckles and Miss Stapleton is really Mrs Stapleton with a curious lisp and a heaving bosom.

WATSON *[Just confirming]* So, Dr Cocker has a spaniel called Mortimer, Mr Telescope's laughing at his daughter's freckled typewriter and Mrs Stapleton is furious with her somewhat bristling Bristols.

HOLMES Bravo. *[Pats WATSON on shoulder]* Well good luck, old chap. *[Exiting]* I'm pretending to go back to London. *[At edge of stage]* The case is all yours. *[Exits]*

WATSON *[To audience]* I can't believe Holmes would trust me to work alone. Me, all by myself on the moor where suddenly it's daytime.

[Daylight lighting comes up. ADLER as BERYL STAPLETON enters in a hurry, distressed. She is slim, elegant, tall, perfect figure, brunette]

BERYL Go back! Go straight back to London, instantly.

WATSON *[Thrown. He wasn't expecting this. Sotto voce]* Ah, not yet. I haven't solved the case.

BERYL *[Desperate]* For God's sake go back and never set foot upon the moor again. *[Suddenly changes character]* Hush, my brother is coming. *[All sweet and light]* Would you mind getting that orchid?

S'TON *[MORIARTY enters as STAPLETON. Puffing]* Ah, I see you two have met. Dr Watson, this is my sister, Beryl. *[WATSON raises hat or bows]*

BERYL *[Shocked]* Dr Watson? I thought you were Sir Henry Baskerville.

WATSON No, he's the chap whose uncle was recently scared to death by the hound of the Baskervilles.

S'TON Indeed he was. *[Taking BERYL]* Now come along, sister. *[They exit. Evil undertone]* Take care, Doctor.

WATSON *[Back as Narrator]* Now where was I? *[Counts using fingers]* The legend? Sir Charles dying of fright? His nephew Sir Henry? *[Hand to head]* Oh dear, I'm confused.

LAURA *[ADLER enters as LAURA LYONS. Extreme beauty, freckled, a very handsome woman. Angry]* Really, sir, what an extraordinary question.

WATSON *[Thrown again]* Miss Stapleton, please.

LAURA Miss Stapleton! I am Laura Lyons, typist, and author of the letter to Sir Henry Baskerville asking him to meet me the night he was frightened to death by that gigantic hound! *[Pause]* Is there no such thing as a gentleman? *[Storms off]*

WATSON *[Upset]* I knew this would happen. Holmes entrusted the case to me and I've made a meal of it. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is a dog's breakfast.

FX *Fearful wail of hound*

WATSON What was that? *[Sees something]* There's that spy out here on the moor. *[Draws gun which is a pointed finger. Hears something]* Footsteps. *[Crouches. Backs upstage. Pause. Impatient]* Come on, come on.

HOLMES *[Offstage]* It's a lovely evening, my dear Watson.

WATSON *[Stunned]* Holmes? *[Rises as HOLMES enters. WATSON delighted]* Holmes!

HOLMES And please be careful with that revolver.

WATSON *[Finger put away. They shake hands]* I never was more glad to see anyone in my life.

HOLMES Or more astonished.

WATSON *[Despairing]* Oh Holmes, this hound mystery is too much for my nerves. What is the meaning of it all?

HOLMES Murder, Watson – cold-blooded murder.

MOR'ITY *[Offstage gives a terrible scream, a prolonged yell of horror and anguish]*

WATSON The hound!

HOLMES Come Watson, come.
[HOLMES and WATSON jog to DC. MORIARTY as escaped convict SELDEN enters, hurries centre and lies face down at their feet facing the audience]

HOLMES *[Puffing as he jogs]* Stapleton has beaten us, Watson. He's let the hound kill again.

WATSON *[Puffing as he jogs]* No, no, surely not! *[Stops. Points at SELDEN]* Hark! What is that?
[HOLMES kneels/bends and makes discovery]

HOLMES *[Saddened]* It's Sir Henry Baskerville.

WATSON *[Distraught]* That brute, Stapleton! I shall never forgive myself.

SELDEN *[Head up, stage whisper]* I'm not Sir Henry.

HOLMES I am more to blame than you, Watson.

WATSON And we heard his scream – my God, that scream.

SELDEN *[Still stage whisper. Insistent]* I'm Selden, the escaped convict.

WATSON *[Wants revenge]* Where is Stapleton? He shall answer for this deed.

HOLMES He shall. I will see to that.

SELDEN *[Louder stage whisper]* I'm wearing Sir Henry's old clothes.
[HOLMES re-examines the body]

WATSON What can we do? *[HOLMES suddenly smiling and happy. Shocked]* Holmes?

HOLMES *[Rises and is deliriously happy]* Oh glee, oh rapturous joy.

WATSON *[Stunned]* Holmes, are you mad?

HOLMES *[Pointing at SELDEN]* A beard! A beard! This man has a beard!

SELDEN *[Actually he doesn't. SELDEN has forgotten his beard, mutters]* Sorry. *[He reaches in his pocket and produces a false beard which he hurriedly prepares]*

WATSON *[Bends to examine SELDEN]* He has ... he has ... *[Waiting for beard to be put in position. It is and so WATSON agrees with HOLMES]* a beard!

HOLMES It's not Sir Henry. It's the escaped convict, Selden. *[Delighted duo dance]*

SELDEN *[Aside to audience]* And they call themselves detectives. *[Exits]*

WATSON I'm so glad you're here, Holmes. You'll know what to do next.

HOLMES *[Indicates one way]* We'll go to Stapleton's house and rescue his beautiful wife.

WATSON Is this where we help the woman with the heaving bosom?

HOLMES *[Indicates another way]* However, first we need to warn Sir Henry. *[Exiting]*

WATSON *[Tagging along]* But couldn't we rescue Mrs Stapleton first? Holmes?

[They exit and lights change to 221B setting. HUDSON enters with chair]

FX *Solo violin music begins then fades after some 15 seconds*

HUDSON *[Thinking aloud]* Come on, Mr Holmes. It's no use you swanning round Devonshire when there's still a mountain of cases to get through.

HOLMES *[Enters]* Mrs Hudson, I'm back.

HUDSON *[Glad he's back]* Ah Mr Holmes. Do you realise ...

WATSON *[Enters very happy]* Mrs Hudson, isn't it wonderful? *[WATSON kisses her hand. She has no idea why]* Wonderful.

HUDSON *[Confused]* Er, yes. *[Looks at HOLMES who shrugs]*

WATSON It is simply the best news ever. *[Indicating HOLMES]* Mr Sherlock Holmes is alive and back in the bosom of his family.

HUDSON *[Uncertain, still]* Well the Baskerville beast certainly was life-threatening.

WATSON *[Scoffs]* Not that pesky little pup. I'm talking about surviving the mighty Reichenbach Falls. *[Pause. The OTHERS don't know how to tell him. WATSON now confused]* What? *[Can't believe they've forgotten]* Have you forgotten Moriarty?

HOLMES I tried to explain, Watson. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* occurred *before* we left for Switzerland.

WATSON *[Stunned]* Before? You mean just now, we went back in time? *[They nod. He despairs]* Oh no! No! *[Breaks down and is helped to sit]* Tell me it's not true.

HUDSON Come along, Doctor. Life goes on – *[Sarcastic]* if not this show.

WATSON But we have to stop the case of *The Final Problem*.

HOLMES *[Touching his arm]* Must dash old man. Chin up, there's a good fellow. *[Exits]*

WATSON *[Calling]* Holmes, wait! Don't cross the Channel. *[Louder]* Avoid Switzerland. *[His head slumps as he fails to save his friend]*

HUDSON Now then, Doctor; time you went back to your wife in Kensington. *[Helping him stand]* Up you get now. *[Quiet announcement]* *The Adventure of the Empty House*. *[HUDSON exits. General lighting for late afternoon comes up. WATSON narrates]*

WATSON *[Recovering]* And so life went on without my friend. Three years after his tragic demise I remain a humble GP yet still with a passion for solving mysteries. *[Wanders]* The latest occurred here in Park Lane. The victim was found dead in his locked room. *[HOLMES enters. WATSON indicates house in opposite direction from SH]* There's the murder scene where the man's head was horribly mutilated. *[HOLMES is an OLD MAN. He is a deformed – bent over – elderly bookseller He carries some imaginary books]* This crime made me think, if only Holmes were here. *[Crash. WATSON accidentally bumps into the OLD MAN who cries out and drops his books. WATSON immediately picks them up and hands them back]* Oh I'm most terribly sorry, sir.

Permit me to collect your books. *[OLD MAN snarls, takes books and exits. WATSON narrates]* I had a good look at the murder mansion and then made my way home. *[Lighting changes to 221B although we're in the study of WATSON'S home in Kensington]*

MAID *[ADLER enters]* Dr Watson, a man with a very bad disguise wishes to see you.

WATSON Oh very well. *[Could sit at imaginary desk]* Show him in.

MAID Yes, Doctor. *[MAID exits and OLD MAN enters carrying books]*

OLD MAN *[Strange croaking voice]* You're surprised to see me, sir.

WATSON I am.

OLD MAN I came to thank the kind gentleman for picking up my imaginary books.

WATSON A mere trifle, sir.

OLD MAN With five volumes you could just fill the gap *[Nods in direction of imaginary bookshelf]* on that second shelf. *[WATSON turns to look at the imaginary shelf. OLD MAN feigns removing disguise and stands tall. WATSON turns back and is stunned]*

WATSON *[It's incredible]* Holmes? *[WATSON faints collapsing onto chair]*

HOLMES *[Calling]* Mrs Hudson! *[Louder]* Mrs Hudson!

MAID *[ADLER enters from behind HOLMES]* I'm sorry, sir but we're in Kensington an' Mrs 'udson lives in Baker Street. You'll 'ave to yell much louder than that. *[Exits]*

HUDSON *[Bursts in puffing from opposite direction carrying another chair]* I ran all the way. *[Catches her breath. Sees WATSON is poorly]* Oh Doctor, what have you done *this* time? *[She attends to him]*

WATSON *[Almost delirious. He's talking about HOLMES]* I can't believe it. Is it really you?

HUDSON Of course it's me. Who'd you think it was?

WATSON Did you really miss that Swiss abyss?

HUDSON Pardon?

HOLMES I think he means me.

HUDSON *[Looks at HOLMES for the first time]* Oh. *[Realises and screams. Let's go of WATSON who slumps again]* Mr Holmes! *[Gets very excited and goes to give him a hug]* Oh Mr Holmes, is it really you? *[HOLMES not comfortable with all this affection]*

WATSON *[Has recovered so joins in – it's a group hug]* It is, Mrs Hudson. It really is my dear old friend.

HOLMES Steady on; *[Louder causing the hug to break up]* the pair of you.

HUDSON *[Suddenly back to normal]* Gentlemen, we're running very late. *[Serious]* We must move to the next case.

WATSON Mrs Hudson, we need to hear how Holmes survived the murderous Moriarty.

HUDSON But there are still many cases and *[Sees WATSON'S pleading eyes]* ... oh, all right, but kindly relate the short version, Mr Holmes. *[WATSON and HUDSON turn chairs upstage and sit facing HOLMES the storyteller]*

HOLMES Harken unto history. *[They settle as HOLMES recalls the tale. Lighting fades to a spot only on HOLMES. Pause for the dramatic presentation]* On that precarious path, a heartbeat from death, I faced the murderous monster.

WATSON *[Spellbound]* I say.

HOLMES Moriarty's venomous visage flared before me.

HUDSON I did say 'short', Mr Holmes.

HOLMES *[Pause then quick denouement]* We fought, I feigned, he fell.

WATSON *[Hugely impressed]* Magnificent.

HUDSON Excellent. Now can we please ... *[Goes to move but is stopped as HOLMES continues]*

HOLMES Then an idea; criminals must think I was dead. I scaled the cliff and fled to foreign parts until, *[Accelerating]* three years later, I read of the Park Lane murder and here I am.

[Lighting back to the 221B scene]

WATSON *[Impressed]* Simply amazing.

HUDSON *[Standing, ready for business]* Well done, Mr Holmes, Now to the next case.

WATSON *[Protesting]* But we haven't solved this one.

HUDSON Gentlemen, please. *[They stare at her. She relents. Despairs]* Oh I give up. *[Exiting with both chairs, snaps her announcement]* *The Adventure of the Empty House – Part Two.*
[Lighting dims to night. Quite dark. HUDSON exits. HOLMES leads WATSON on journey]

HOLMES Come, Watson – a journey through London.

WATSON But where are we going? *[They stop upstage]*

HOLMES To this empty house. Come inside. Shhh.

[They creep downstage as they move through the house to its front]

WATSON It's pitch-black in here.

[Lighting dims even more. They creep downstage towards an imaginary window, which is lit, on the apron of the stage. They whisper their speeches]

HOLMES *[Whisper]* Look through this imaginary window and tell me where we are.

WATSON *[Peers through window]* Righto, Holmes but ... *[Shocked]* Baker Street!

HOLMES We are opposite 221B. *[MORIARTY enters as MORAN and creeps down behind the men]*

WATSON But why?

HOLMES *[Pointing]* Look up at our old sitting-room.

WATSON *[Looks up. Startled]* Good heavens! It's you!

HOLMES It's a model.

WATSON *[Startled]* But it just moved.

HOLMES To confuse the watching criminals, every few minutes, Mrs Hudson handles me from behind.

WATSON *[Thinking]* I'd be confused if Mrs Hudson handled me from behind.

HOLMES Hush, Moriarty's co-conspirator, Colonel Sebastian Moran, is about to enter.

[The DUO take a step each to one side allowing MORAN to kneel between them. MORAN is elderly, bald with a grizzled moustache. He wears an evening dress shirt under an open overcoat. He carries an imaginary rifle]

MORAN *[Gruff whisper]* Now Mister Sherlock Holmes, this bullet's for you. *[Crouching, MORAN aims rifle at model in 221B opposite]* Cheerio. *[Fires rifle]* Bang!

[Sudden light on scene as HOLMES and WATSON come alive and call for the police]

HOLMES & WATSON *[Calling]* Police! Police!

[HUDSON and ADLER rush in wearing London Bobby helmets. Each woman grabs an arm of the criminal. MORAN is furious]

LESTRADE *[Played by HUDSON, deep voice]* We're here, Mr Holmes.

HOLMES Inspector Lestrade.

LESTRADE It's good to have you back in London, sir.

HOLMES I think when you find the bullet just fired at my *dummy* ...

MORAN *[More furious]* Dummy! *[Vicious]* You cunning fiend, Holmes.

HOLMES You'll find it matches the bullet which killed Ronald Adair in Park Lane.

[Angry roar from MORAN]

LESTRADE Very clever, Mr Holmes. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*

ADLER *[Pathetic attempt at deep voice]* Yes, very clever, Mr 'olmes.

Song Number 7 Back In Town

WATSON *Our boy is back in town*
QUINTET *Our boy is back in town*
Our boy is back in town.

[ADLER escorts the grumbling murderer away]

HOLMES And don't take all night, Lestrade. Mrs Hudson's in a flap about being late.
HUDSON *[Whips off helmet and now as herself]* You can say that again.
[HUDSON, ADLER and MORAN exit. HOLMES and WATSON move C to 221B]

FX *Solo violin music which fades after some 15 seconds*
[Lights come up in 221B. It's evening. HOLMES and WATSON are there]

WATSON I say Holmes, did you know Inspector Lestrade is really a woman?
HOLMES All I know, Watson, is that Mrs Hudson is about to enter this very room.
HUDSON *[Enters agitated]* Gentlemen, we have a crisis. There are still forty-four cases left.
DUO *[Shocked]* Forty-four!
HUDSON Now I've been thinking. Why don't we tell more than one case at a time?
WATSON *[Aghast]* Mrs Hudson that is preposterous.
HOLMES Tricky but possible.
HUDSON It's definitely possible and I'll prove it in *[Announcing]* *The Adventure of the Norwood Builder.*

M'LANE *[MORIARTY enters as John McFARLANE, 27 year old solicitor with flaxen hair, distressed]*
Mr Holmes, I'm John McFarlane and am about to be arrested for murder.

HUDSON *[Indicating McFARLANE]* This man is innocent.
WATSON Oh Mrs Hudson, please don't interrupt. We're going as fast as we can.
HUDSON *[Indignant]* Hudson? I'm Mrs McFarlane, the mother of this fine, young man. *[To son]* Don't worry my boy. *[To HOLMES]* The murdered man was a beast who hated me because I once spurned his advances.

M'LANE But Mother, the police found my thumbprint in the murdered man's house.
WATSON *[Remembers]* Of course! The house where Holmes made us shout very loud.
HOLMES Kindly join in the cry of 'Fire'? One, two, three.
TUTTI *[Loud]* Fire!
HOLMES Again.
TUTTI *[Louder]* Fire!
HOLMES Again.
TUTTI *[Louder still]* Fire!
HOLMES *[Pointing to imaginary door]* Then a door will open to reveal a wizened old man.
[General day lighting comes up. OTHERS face this direction]
[ADLER as ELSIE CUBITT, young American wife in dressing-gown rushes from behind OTHERS to McFARLANE who hasn't a clue what's going on. She is distraught]

ELSIE No, Hilton, stay here! Forget this terrible business.
M'LANE *[Confused]* Madam, who are you?
HUDSON *[As HUDSON, pleased her plan is in operation]* She's Elsie Cubitt.
WATSON *[Distressed]* She's not in this case.
HUDSON She is if we tell two tales at once
M'LANE *[As the actor]* Do you want me to skip to where I'm Hilton Cubitt, a Norfolk farmer with a young American bride?
HUDSON Yes, keep moving. *[Announces]* *The Adventure of the Dancing Men.* *[Exits]*

CUBITT *[MORIARTY is CUBITT, tall, ruddy, clean-shaven. To his wife as they exit]* We'll return to Norfolk and let Mr Holmes sort out those funny drawings.
[HOLMES moves centre followed by a bewildered WATSON]

WATSON I think this is where we catch the train to Norfolk.

HOLMES Only to learn that Mr and Mrs Cubitt have been shot.

WATSON *[Remembers]* Yes! The police reckon she shot him and then herself.

HOLMES It's about those stick figure drawings – the dancing men. Each figure is a letter of the alphabet.

WATSON And you've cracked the cipher, Holmes.

HOLMES I'll write a note in code to the other man involved in the shooting.

WATSON That will lure him to us. *[Pointing]* And here he is.
[Not quite. MORIARTY rushes in as JONAS OLDACRE the old man who tried to fake his own murder in The Adventure of the Norwood Builder. He is wizened, crafty, odious, shifty]

O'ACRE *[Coughing]* The smoke, the smoke. There's a fire! *[Continues coughing]*

WATSON That's not him.

HOLMES It's Jonas Oldacre the man who faked his own murder in the *The Adventure of the Norwood Builder*.

WATSON Go back. We've already done your case.

O'ACRE *[Arguing]* I come on when everyone calls "Fire!"

HOLMES Kindly leave. This is Norfolk not Norwood!

O'ACRE *[Exiting, angry]* Well somebody definitely yelled 'Fire'! *[Exits]*
[ALDER enters riding a scooter stopping between the men. This 'modern yet old' model has a bell and she rings it. ADLER is Miss VIOLET SMITH, a tall, graceful, young music teacher]

SMITH Mr Holmes, I am Miss Violet Smith, a teacher of music.

WATSON *[Minor panic]* No, you're too early. *[HUDSON enters]*

HOLMES In the country, I presume, from your complexion.

HUDSON *[Announces]* *The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist*. *[Exits]*

SMITH I'm being followed by a bearded man who disappears.

HOLMES I'm a tad busy at the moment.

WATSON *[Only just remaining sane]* You're busy!

SMITH Whenever, Mr Holmes. *[Pedalling/pushing off]* Toodle pip. *[Exits ringing bell]*

HOLMES Help me out here, Watson.

WATSON *[Struggling]* Ah, we travel to Surrey to rescue Miss Smith from a forced marriage to Mr Woodley who has just been shot by Mr Williamson who plays the violin.
[MORIARTY staggers in distressed. Has he been shot?]

HOLMES And here he is.
[MORIARTY is Dr HUXTABLE THORNEYCROFT, a large pompous man in academic gown]

T'CROFT Help me, help me. *[Half-collapses and is attended to by WATSON]*

WATSON That's not the wounded bridegroom. *[HUDSON enters]*

HOLMES It's Dr Huxtable Thorneycroft.

HUDSON *[Announces]* *The Adventure of the Priory School*.

WATSON *[His medical diagnosis of Thorneycroft]* Absolute exhaustion.

HUDSON *[Goes to THORNEYCROFT]* It's not easy for anyone, Doctor. We're all under pressure. *[Assists THORNEYCROFT to exit]* Come along, sir. *[They exit]*

ELSIE *[ADLER bursts in]* I've been shot. It's all those dancing men. *[Exits]*

HOLMES Watson, I think I'm lost.

WATSON Well one of Dr Huxtable's pupils has been abducted.

HOLMES Then let us examine the Derbyshire moors.

WATSON *[Finds some tracks]* Here! The trail of a bicycle.

HOLMES *[Inspecting]* But not *the* bicycle. This is a Dunlop tyre. We seek a Palmer.

SMITH *[Scoots across the back of the stage. She rings her bell]* See you in Surrey, Mr Holmes.

WATSON *[From Derbyshire to Surrey]* She's taking the long way home.

HOLMES *[Indicating side of stage]* Come Watson, on to the *Fighting Cock Inn*.

WATSON Refreshments?

HOLMES *[Starts to move]* That's where the abducted boy is hidden.

HUDSON *[Enters holding up a hand]* Stop! *[Detectives freeze. HUDSON announces]* The abducted boy is safe but not so the women in *The Adventure of Black Peter*. *[Suddenly HUDSON, as the wife of Peter CAREY, starts screaming and rushing towards the men. ADLER, as CAREY'S daughter, enters screaming and runs to her mother. Women are threatened by CAREY played by MORIARTY who enters in a rage. CAREY is a retired whaling ship captain, a drunkard who beats his wife and daughter. CAREY mimes brandishing a stick]*

CAREY *[Violent]* Come here you rotten women. *[The women use HOLMES and WATSON as a shield]* I'll flog you within an inch of your life!

HUDSON *[In-between running, hiding and screaming]* Do something, Mr Holmes.

HOLMES *[Help me out here, old chap]* Watson?

CAREY I'll kill the both of you!

WATSON Is this the drunken sailor who beats his wife and daughter?

WOMEN Yes!

WATSON Apparently he gets harpooned in his shed. *[Unison foot-stamp]*
[CAREY suddenly freezes, faces front and holds his arms out as the imaginary harpoon rips into his chest in time with the foot-stamp. His eyes and mouth are wide open with the imaginary harpoon twanging near his tummy. Face grotesque. The WOMEN take one arm each and 'drag' him off]

HUDSON *[As she exits, announces]* *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton*.
[Lights change to 221B and HOLMES and WATSON go home]

FX *Solo violin music which fades after some 15 seconds*

WATSON But, Holmes, who is this Milverton?

HOLMES The worst man in London, the king of all blackmailers.

WATSON Then why is he coming here?

HOLMES Because I represent a beautiful woman soon to marry an Earl; but the marriage will not take place unless Milverton is paid for letters she wrote long ago.

WATSON I think I hear him now.
[MORIARTY enters as MILVERTON, 50, plump, perpetual frozen smile, gold-rimmed glasses]

M'TON Mr Holmes, is the lady prepared to pay seven thousand pounds?

HOLMES She can only afford two thousand.

M'TON *[Scoffs]* Then the Earl gets her letters. The marriage is off. *[Starts to exit]*

HOLMES *[Action man]* Watson, stop him!
[WATSON moves but freezes when MILVERTON produces an imaginary gun]

M'TON Not very original, Mr Holmes. *[Exits laughing]*
[WATSON looks at the vanished blackmailer whilst HOLMES puts on a burglar's mask]

WATSON We have failed the lady, Holmes. The blackmailer has won. *[Turns back and is shocked]* Holmes?

HOLMES I mean to burgle Milverton's house tonight.

WATSON *[Produces his own mask]* When do we start?

HOLMES *[Slaps/pats WATSON'S arm]* Good show, old man. The raid is afoot.

FX *Music of With Cat-Like Tread from The Pirates of Penzance which fades*

[Lighting changes to dark night and whole stage is so lit. In time with the music, HOLMES and WATSON of Burglars Inc creep centre into MILVERTON'S house. They whisper their lines]

WATSON And you're sure we're in Milverton's house?
HOLMES Yes.
WATSON And you're sure he's asleep?
HOLMES Shhh. Someone's coming.
[MORIARTY as Jonas OLDACRE rushes in - again]
O'ACRE *[Loud]* The fire! Where's the fire?
H & W *[Meaning HOLMES and WATSON together]* Shhhh.
O'ACRE *[Whispering]* The fire! Where's the fire?
WATSON Get off! You're in the wrong case.
O'ACRE *[Exiting, whispering]* Well somebody bloody well yelled 'Fire!'
SMITH *[Scootering across the stage upstage]* I love your mask, Mr Holmes.
HOLMES *[Touch peeved with WATSON]* Any more cases, Watson?
WATSON *[About to cry]* I don't think so.
HOLMES Right, I'll break into Milverton's safe. You watch the door.
[HOLMES and WATSON start to move but WATSON is suddenly startled]
WATSON Look out! It's Milverton!
[The men scamper together and pretend to hide behind an imaginary curtain]
HOLMES Quick! Behind this imaginary curtain.
[MORIARTY enters as MILVERTON wearing a dressing-gown/smoking-jacket]
M'TON *[Normal voice]* Well, you're nearly half an hour late.
WATSON *[Whispering still]* We weren't late.
HOLMES *[Whispering]* Not us. Her.
[ADLER enters as society LADY, unnamed in the Canon, who is yet another of MILVERTON'S victims. She could wear a full-length cape with hood and holds imaginary gun in a muff]
LADY *[Normal volume]* It is I, another woman whose life you have ruined.
[HUDSON enters UC and creeps in behind the men]
M'TON Don't think you can bully me. I could call my servants and have you arrested.
LADY You will ruin no more lives as you have ruined mine. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
HUDSON *[Pushes between the detectives, whispering]* Gentlemen!

SONG NUMBER 9 She's Got a Gun

HUDSON *Look out! She's got a gun*
ADLER *Look out! I've got a gun*
QUINTET *Look out! She's got a gun.*
[HUDSON exits]

M'TON *[Fearful]* No! Don't shoot!
LADY *[Produces finger]* Take that, you cad! *[Points finger as if firing]*
H & W *[The FX Dept]* Bang. *[MILVERTON claps his chest after each 'Bang' as the bullets strike]*
LADY And that.
H & W Bang.
LADY And that.
H & W Bang.
LADY And that.
H & W Bang. *[The last 'clasp' could be MILVERTON'S posterior]*

WATSON *[MILVERTON drops to his knees and is about to die]*
HOLMES *[Whispering]* I think he's done for. *[MILVERTON recovers in pain]*
Not necessarily.
[MILVERTON stands shakily and makes a big gesture of clutching his chest. As his hands touch his chest, that is the cue for the FX boys to fire yet again]

H & W Bang. *[MILVERTON about to die]*
LADY *[Reprimanding the firing-squad]* I haven't fired it yet.
HOLMES *[Whispering]* Sorry.
WATSON *[Whispering]* I think I'm out of ammo.
LADY And that.
H & W Bang. *[MILVERTON collapses. He's done for this time]*
LADY *[To detectives]* Thank you, gentlemen. *[To audience]* I like a good bang.
[BLACKOUT. All exit. Spot HUDSON who enters wearing a Napoleon hat and tucks one hand inside her jacket a la Bonaparte 'imself. Announces]

HUDSON *[French accent]* *The Adventure of the Six Napoleons* or *Le aventure les six Napoleons*. *[Becomes the narrator with lousy French accent]* Someone was stealing busts of za famous French emperor. Five busts were stolen then smashed. One man was murdered. Monsieur Holmes purchased the sixth bust in which was hidden za famous black pearl of za Borgias. And now from Dunkirk to Downing Street and *[Announces in normal voice]* *The Mystery of the Second Stain*. *[Exits]*
[Lights up on 221B. HOLMES and WATSON enter]

WATSON *[Excited]* Holmes, can it be? Our visitor is the British Prime Minister.
[MORIARTY enters as the PM. He could wear a WW2 tin helmet and speak a la Churchill]

PM Gentlemen, a letter from the Kaiser has been stolen.
HOLMES Have you informed the police?
PM Good Lord, no. We must keep the matter secret otherwise it means war.
WATSON I say.
HOLMES There are three secret agents who would steal this letter. One has just been murdered by his mad French wife. That is the clue to solve this mystery and maintain peace in our time.

PM *[Churchillian salute]* Ah, peace in our time. *[PM delighted and claps]* Bravo, Mr Holmes.

HUDSON *[Enters]* Yes bravo indeed but now ...
HOLMES Thank you, Mrs Hudson. And what a pleasant note on which to conclude our case-review.
HUDSON *[Upset]* Conclude?
WATSON Yes Mrs Hudson, we've finally reached the end.
HUDSON Can't you three count? There are still thirty-six to go.
TRIO *[Shocked]* Thirty-six?
HUDSON Yes but I have an idea. Over the years, Mr Holmes, I've met most of your visitors. I could mention their names to see if you can identify their case?
HOLMES A test, by Jove.
WATSON Well really, Holmes, I have the advantage as I recorded the cases.
HOLMES *[Indicates]* Perhaps Professor Moriarty should join us.
MOR'ITY *[Enters]* Perhaps he should. But beware of the criminal *mastermind*.
[TRIO line up across the stage as if on the set of a TV quiz show]

HUDSON Now gentlemen, hands on buzzers and remember, one point for a correct answer and one point off if you're wrong. Question one.

ADLER *[Dramatic entry and cries]* Stop! *[OTHERS turn and face her]* How dare you!

HOLMES Ah, Miss Adler, where would a quiz show be without the token floozie?

ADLER *[Angry]* How dare you turn these literary gems into some tawdry circus.

WATSON It's only a quiz, madam, in pursuit of matters trivial.

ADLER Trivial pursuit! Have you no respect for classic mystery fiction and the great man himself?

HUDSON Look Missy, without some radical pruning this show'll run past midnight.

ADLER You are treating Sir Arthur with contempt.

MOR'ITY Sir Arthur?

HOLMES I believe she refers to the long dead Arthur Conan Doyle.

WATSON Oh please, he was some mediocre literary agent who helped promote my riverting tales.

MOR'ITY *[Indignant]* He's the rat who pushed me off a cliff.

ADLER The cases solved by Sherlock Holmes and recorded by Dr Watson must not be dismissed in so cavalier a fashion.

HUDSON *[ADLER is spoiling HUDSON'S plan]* Thank you, Miss Adler or is it now Mrs Norton?

ADLER These marvellous accounts of forensic deduction should be saluted with dignity.

WATSON *[Has changed his tune]* Well said, madam.

ADLER You've omitted many and skimmed over others.

HUDSON Look, the car park closes in ten minutes.

ADLER You've made Dr Watson a figure of fun.

WATSON Yes but it's friendly satire.

ADLER And you've ignored the vibrant melodrama of the work.

HOLMES Women are never to be entirely trusted.

ADLER Let us present at least one authentic re-telling of a case investigated by the world's greatest consulting detective? *[Pause]* Well?

OTHERS *[Reluctant agreement although WATSON is keen]* Hear, hear!

HUDSON *[Back as announcer]* And now, finally and most sincerely, *The Valley of Fear*.

FX *Dramatic chords*
[MORIARTY, HUDSON and ADLER exit. Lighting changes to centre area where it's a sunny winter's day. We are in Sussex and HOLMES and WATSON move DC]

WATSON *[Indicating imaginary house]* So this is the ancient manor house of Birlstone.

HOLMES The scene of a brutal murder. *[Indicates imaginary body]* And here, the body.
[HOLMES and WATSON look down at an imaginary body]

WATSON Good heavens. His face is unrecognizable.

HOLMES A sawn-off shot-gun, Watson, would make a mess of any face.

WATSON His pyjamas suggest he was about to retire. *[Looks off]* Someone's coming.
[MORIARTY enters as BARKER, 45, tall, clean shaven, thick, strong body, black eyebrows]

BARKER Gentlemen, I am Cecil Barker, a close friend of the deceased, Mr Jack Douglas.

HOLMES The facts, please, Mr Barker. *[WATSON moves to imaginary window]*

BARKER It was near midnight when I heard a muffled sound. I rushed in and poor Douglas was lying as you see him now.

WATSON The murderer has slipped out this window and waded across the moat.

HOLMES I wonder how he entered the house with the draw-bridge raised?

WATSON *[Spots print]* Look! A footprint made in blood.

HOLMES *[Examining body]* How strange. His wedding-ring is missing and there's a symbol burnt upon his arm.

BARKER That was from his time in America.
HOLMES *[Moving to one side]* And what have we here; *one* dumb-bell.
BARKER Mrs Douglas is ready to be interviewed.
[ADLER enters. She is Mrs DOUGLAS, 30, tall, beautiful, reserved, composed]
WATSON *[Informing HOLMES with nod of head]* Holmes, the widow.
MRS B Have you discovered anything?
HOLMES Did your husband speak of America and any danger he faced?
MRS B Rarely but I knew by the way he looked at unexpected strangers, he had powerful enemies.
WATSON Was there one thing he mentioned?
MRS B He used to ask, *[Imitates husband]* “Are we never to get out of the Valley of Fear?”
HOLMES Thank you, madam. We will detain you no longer.
[She bows then makes a sweeping exit with BARKER following]
WATSON She’s a beautiful woman, Holmes.
HOLMES They’re lying.
WATSON Lying? Who’s lying?
HOLMES They claim the assassin had less than a minute to remove the wedding ring and leave a note and footprint before escaping across the water.
WATSON But there *are* no footprints beyond the water.
HOLMES And the one on the windowsill was put there deliberately to fool the police.
WATSON But what of Douglas being afraid and this *Valley of Fear*?
HOLMES An invention by the widow and her lover.
WATSON Holmes, can you prove these claims?
HOLMES I can with the aid of your umbrella.
WATSON Umbrella?
[Lights change to night. HOLMES leads WATSON to one side. MORIARTY as BARKER enters and is lit. He mimes leaning out of a window DC and dragging in an imaginary parcel]
HOLMES *[Whisper]* Crouch in these bushes, Watson and keep quiet.
WATSON *[Crouching, whispering]* It’s the middle of the night and I’m freezing.
HOLMES Using your umbrella I hooked a parcel from the moat.
WATSON Is that why Barker was sent a note about draining the moat?
HOLMES *[Pointing]* And there he is. Come on.
[HOLMES and WATSON burst in either side of the stooping BARKER who is angry]
BARKER What the devil is the meaning of this?
HOLMES The bundle you’ve just retrieved was weighed down by a dumb-bell and contains boots, clothes and a knife, Mr Barker. Kindly explain.
BARKER I will say nothing.
MRS B *[Enters]* Yes, Cecil, you have done enough for us.
HOLMES I strongly recommend, madam, that you ask *Mr Douglas* to tell his own story.
[OTHER males stunned, even the woman is taken aback at the skill of HOLMES]
WATSON *[To HOLMES]* I say, old chap, *[Indicating imaginary body]* Douglas is dead.
MRS B Tell them, Jack. It’s best this way.
BARKER *[Nodding]* I’ll tell you the story of The Valley of Fear. *[Lights could dim but come up on BARKER]* I have done nothing to be ashamed of but there are men who want me dead. Last night one sprang at me with a sawn-off shot-gun. Both barrels exploded and *[Indicating the body]* the killer lost his face.
MRS B It’s all true.

BARKER We dressed the body in my night-clothes and buried his in the moat. We hoped the world would believe I was dead allowing us to slip away with a new identity. And that, gentlemen, is the tragedy at Birlstone Manor.
[BLACKOUT and all exit. HUDSON enters and is lit. OTHERS change costumes]

HUDSON *[Announcing]* And now the final flashback. In the freezing winter of 1875, rural Pennsylvania was a harsh land with much violent crime. Men formed brotherhoods and murder was rife. The police were powerless, the citizens afraid and woe betide any member of the brotherhood who betrayed their Lodge.
[MORIARTY enters and is lit. The actors in this mini play are McMURDO – Moriarty, ETTIE – Adler, McGINTY – Watson, BALDWIN – Holmes and STANGER - Hudson]
One day a stranger came to town which is where we begin our tale with Jack McMurdo looking for a boarding-house.
[Lights down on HUDSON who remains on the side of the stage. The stage has two areas of lighting RC and LC. Lights up on small area LC. This is the interior of the home of Jacob Shaftner and his daughter ETTIE. McMURDO enters from C and ETTIE enters from wings. ETTIE is 19, blonde, beautiful and of German extraction]

McMURDO *[Touch of the Blarney]* Well, I never did see a more beautiful picture.

ETTIE I thought it was father. Come in. I expect him back every minute.
[McMURDO continues to admire ETTIE]

McMURDO I'm Jack McMurdo and your house was recommended. I thought it might suit me – and now I know it will.

ETTIE *[Smiling]* I'm Miss Ettie Shaftner and I run this house. *[Couple freeze, light fades]*

HUDSON *[Is lit – announces]* And now let us meet two Scowrers, the nastiest men in town.
[Kill light on HUDSON, lights up elsewhere as McGINTY and BALDWIN are lit]

McGINTY What do you know of this new fella, McMurdo?

BALDWIN He's on the run from the police because he killed some guy in Chicago.

McGINTY Good. The Scowrers need men like him. Where's he staying?

BALDWIN With old Jacob.

McGINTY With your Ettie? You're a trusting mug. If McMurdo's as flash as people say, he'll steal your Ettie from under y'nose.
[BALDWIN seethes and lights fade coming up on the couple in the house]

McMURDO Ettie, acushla, you have won my heart.

ETTIE Hush, Jack. You only met me yesterday.

McMURDO I love you, Ettie and I'll go on saying so until you say 'yes'.

ETTIE My father will not approve.

McMURDO Let me take you back home to the sweet valleys of County Monaghan.

ETTIE No, Jack. And you must be wary of Ted Baldwin and the Scowrers.

McMURDO *[Kneels and takes her hand]* No harm shall ever come to you, Ettie.
[Suddenly BALDWIN enters and frightens ETTIE]

ETTIE Mr Baldwin, you're early.

BALDWIN *[Snarling and indicating his rival]* Who is this?

ETTIE He's a new boarder, Mr McMurdo.

BALDWIN Maybe Miss Ettie has told you how it is between us.

McMURDO I didn't understand there was any relationship.

BALDWIN *[Threatening]* Well it's a fine evening for a walk.

McMURDO I'm in no humour for a walk.

BALDWIN Then maybe for a fight.

McMURDO *[Shaping up]* That I am.

HOLMES *[Spoken over the song]* You know I first came to light way back in 1887 and here I am today more popular than ever. Sir Arthur only penned sixty of my tales but now there are literally thousands. I have millions of fans around the world and some *still* write to me today at Baker Street. You see many believe I was a real person and why not? I've been in more plays, books and films than any other fictional character. Ah yes, my name and fame will always live on whenever - the game's afoot!

[Song is repeated and finishes. BLACKOUT. MUSIC BEGINS for Curtain Calls]

Song Number 10 Curtain Calls

[This number involves individual bows in order – Adler, Hudson, Moriarty, Watson and Holmes. Then two company bows followed by a reprise of The Famous Sherlock Holmes. BLACKOUT]

[Company exit in BLACKOUT. House lights come up and the PLAYOUT is played]

Song Number 11 Playout

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