

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Chapter one—*The* **FINAL PROBLEM**

LONDON IS CHILL, THIS FRIDAY NIGHT IN 1891, AND THE SOUNDS OF THE COBBLE-STONE STREETS ARE MUFFLED IN A SHROUD OF DAMP FOG...

A SOLITARY FIGURE, STRAIGHT AS A RAMROD, STRIDES THROUGH THE ROILING MIST, HIS PALE BROW SHADOWED, HIS DEEP EYES GLITTERING IN THE FLICKER FROM THE GAS LAMP...

SUDDENLY, THE CLATTER OF HORSES' HOOVES, THE RATTLE OF IRON WHEELS--AND THERE IS BUT A SPLIT SECOND TO AVOID CERTAIN DEATH--

ADAPTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
BY Mr. DENNIS J. O'NEIL & Mr. *Eller*, ESQUIRES

SHERLOCK HOLMES, Vol. 1, No. 1, Sept.-Oct., 1975. Published bi-monthly by NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019. Carmine Infantino, Publisher. Dennis O'Neil, Editor. Allan Asherman, Assistant Editor. Sol Harrison, Vice President-Director of Operations. Bernard Kashdan, Vice President-Business Manager. Jack Adler, Production Manager. Advertising Representative, Sanford Schwarz & Co., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. (212) 391-1400. Copyright © 1975 by National Periodical Publications, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed in U.S.A.

SUBSCRIPTION DEPT.: National Periodical Publications, Inc., 155 Allen Blvd., Formingdale, N.Y. 11733. Rate \$3 in U.S.A. (\$4 elsewhere). Subscription is for consecutive issues totalling \$3.00 of their cover prices.

This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition, nor affixed to, nor as part of any advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.

ONLY WHIP-LIKE REFLEXES
ENABLE HIM TO DODGE
THE PERIL--

--AND AS HE STANDS
AND BRUSHES THE
SOOT FROM HIS
GARMENTS AND WATCHES
THE CAB VANISH INTO
THE GLOOM, A GRIM
SMILE PLAYS ON HIS
THIN LIPS...



ALMOST IMMEDIATELY,
FURTHER DANGER
PRESENTS ITSELF.
FOR A THICK-SET
MAN BEARING A
DEADLY WEAPON
SPRINGS FROM
THE DARKNESS.



THE CLUB CLEAVES
NOTHING MORE THAN
THE MOIST AIR--



--AND THE INTENDED VICTIM ASSUMES
A BOXER'S STANCE AND SNAPS A
LIGHTNING LEFT FIST INTO HIS
ATTACKER'S ASTONISHED FACE.



THIS IS
FOLLOWED
BY A
CRUSHING
RIGHT, AS
HARD AS
GRANITE--





AH, OFFICER. YOU WILL PERHAPS BE GOOD ENOUGH TO CONVEY THIS RUFFIAN TO A CELL?

THAT I WILL, GUV. I WAS RUNNIN' TO GIVE YOU A HAND... BUT YOU DIDN'T NEED A BIT OF IT, EH?



SAY, AREN'T YOU THAT DETECTIVE BLOKE WHAT'S ALWAYS HELPIN' SCOTLAND YARD--?

I AM INDEED--



--MISTER SHERLOCK HOLMES!



WITHIN MINUTES, HE IS TURNING INTO A WARMLY LIGHTED DOORWAY WHICH SHINES LIKE A WELCOMING BEACON--



--AND WITHIN, IS GREETED BY HIS CLOSEST FRIEND, DR. JOHN B. WATSON, WHO CRIES--

HOLMES! BY JOVE, YOU HAD ME WORRIED! YOU'VE BEEN GONE THREE DAYS!

THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT DAYS OF MY CAREER, MY DEAR WATSON!



I HAVE BEEN LAYING A TRAP FOR THE ORGANIZER OF HALF THAT IS EVIL AND NEARLY ALL THAT IS UNDETECTED IN THIS GREAT CITY!-- A GENIUS, A PHILOSOPHER, AN ABSTRACT THINKER--



--MY ABSOLUTE EQUAL, SAVE THAT I USE MY GIFTS FOR JUSTICE...

BUT WAIT! I HEAR A STEP ON THE STAIRS. WE'RE ABOUT TO HAVE A VISITOR, WATSON!



MISTER SHERLOCK HOLMES?

I AM HE! AND THIS IS MY VALUED ASSOCIATE, DR. WATSON!

A PLEASURE!



AND YOUR NAME IS--?

HENRY HUNTER, SIR! I'M A LAW CLERK WITH THE FIRM OF HEATH, STOUT AND THORPE!

I'VE COME TO BEG YOUR ASSISTANCE...



...IT'S MY MUM! CLEAN VANISHED! SHE HAS! WENT INTO HER GARDEN AND HASN'T BEEN HEARD OF SINCE!

DREADFUL BUSINESS--!



I SUGGEST, SIR, THAT YOU ARE A LIAR! YOU ARE NO MORE A LAW CLERK THAN I AM OUR GOOD QUEEN VICTORIA!

I FURTHER SUGGEST THAT YOU ARE A PAID KILLER IN THE EMPLOY OF A CRIMINAL MASTERMIND!



HOLMES! HE'S PULLING A SWORD FROM HIS CANE--!


OBVIOUSLY, MY DEAR WATSON! SURELY YOU EXPECTED HIM TO!



HOWEVER, THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM, AS YOU ARE AWARE...



...I HAVE SOME SMALL SKILL AS A FENCER...



...CERTAINLY ENOUGH TO DISARM SUCH A CLUMSY OPPONENT!




I SUGGEST YOU FLEE THE COUNTRY! YOUR EMPLOYER DOES NOT LOOK KINDLY ON FAILURE!

DASH IT, HOLMES! HOW THE DEVIL DID YOU LEARN THE FELLOW IS AN IMPOSTOR?




ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR CHAP, OBSERVE HIS INDEX FINGER! NOTICE IT IS WITHOUT CALLUS!

A LAW CLERK INEVITABLY DEVELOPS A CALLUS HERE FROM HOLDING A PEN FOR TEN HOURS A DAY!



HIS BOOTS, TOO, ARE INDICATIVE! THEY ARE FASHIONED FROM PIG SKIN! THEY COST TWENTY QUID IF THEY COST A HA'PENNY!

HARDLY THE SORT OF FOOTWEAR A CLERK CAN AFFORD, EHP?



THERE WERE, OF COURSE, PRECISELY FOURTEEN ADDITIONAL INDICATIONS THAT HE WAS NOT TELLING THE TRUTH!



LOCK THE DOOR, WATSON!
WE MAY HAVE
OTHER UNWELCOME
VISITORS TONIGHT!

MY FOE HAS
MADE THREE
ATTEMPTS ON
MY LIFE IN THE LAST
FIFTY MINUTES!

WILL YOU
EXPLAIN THIS
MATTER BEFORE
I TAKE LEAVE OF
MY SENSES?



GLADLY!
FOR YEARS, I
HAVE BEEN
AWARE OF AN
ORGANIZING POWER
BEHIND THE LONDON
UNDERWORLD!

I TRIED
TO BREAK
THROUGH THE
VEIL WHICH
SHROUDED IT
AND AT LAST
I UNMASKED
THE NAPOLEON
OF CRIME--
PROFESSOR JAMES
MORIARTY!



TODAY, THE LAST
STEPS WERE TAKEN
AND IF MY PLAN
SUCCEEDS MORIARTY
WILL BE UNDONE IN
THREE DAYS!

YOU CAN
IMAGINE MY
SURPRISE WHEN
MORIARTY HIM-
SELF VISITED ME
THIS MORNING...

...IN AN INSTANT I DREW
MY REVOLVER! HE SMILED,
BLINKED AND SAID--

YOU HAVE PLACED
ME IN DANGER OF
LOSING MY LIBERTY!
THE SITUATION IS
BECOMING AN
IMPOSSIBLE ONE!

HAVE
YOU ANY
SUGGESTION
TO MAKE?



YOU MUST
DROP IT, MR.
HOLMES! YOU MUST
STAND CLEAR OR
BE TRODDEN UNDER
FOOT!



EARLY THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE COMPANIONS STEP INTO THE CRISP, TANGY MOUNTAIN AIR--

--AND AFTER AN HOUR'S BRISK CLIMB, STAND, AWE-STRUCK, AT THE REICHENBACH FALLS.

BY HEAVEN, HOLMES, HAVE YOU EVER SEEN SUCH MAGNIFICENCE?

NEVER, MY DEAR WATSON! I AM GLAD TO HAVE LOOKED UPON IT BEFORE I DIE!

I THINK THAT I MAY GO SO FAR AS TO SAY, WATSON, THAT I HAVE NOT LIVED IN VAIN! THE AIR OF LONDON IS SWEETER FOR MY PRESENCE!

TRUE, TRUE! BUT WHAT'S THIS TALK OF DEATH?

YOU'LL LIVE TO BE A HUNDRED--!

DR. WATSON!
DR. WATSON!

AN ENGLISH LADY AT THE HOTEL ...VERY ILL!

YOU'D BEST TEND TO HER, WATSON!

I'LL GO AT ONCE!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.



I'LL RETURN IN A TRICE!

I FEAR I WON'T BE WAITING, DEAR FRIEND!



YOU MAY SHOW YOURSELF, PROFESSOR MORIARTY!

YOU OBSERVED ME CLIMBING THE OTHER PATH, MR. HOLMES?



YES! AND I IMAGINE YOU SENT THE LAD TO SUMMON WATSON WITH THE STORY OF THE SICK WOMAN! -- A LIE, NO DOUBT!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOUR THIRST FOR REVENGE WOULD PUT YOU ON MY TRAIL!



I AM PLEASSED TO THINK I SHALL FINALLY RID SOCIETY OF YOUR PRESENCE!

IF WE HAVE NO FURTHER QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS, I SUGGEST WE SETTLE OUR DIFFERENCES--



--AND I THINK NEITHER OF US WILL SURVIVE!



END OF PART ONE

CHAPTER TWO THE ADVENTURE OF THE EMPTY HOUSE

NIGHTFALL... AND
THE HONORABLE
RONALD ADAIR
RETURNS FROM
HIS CLUB...



A GOOD
EVENING TO
YOU, SIR!

YOU HAVE NO IDEA
HOW GOOD IT IS,
OFFICER!



I WON
FORTY QUID
AT CARDS--

YAHHH

SIR! WHAT'S
WRONG?



HE'S BEEN
SHOT! HE'S
DEAD!



SOON...

KIND OF YOU TO
COME BY, DR. WATSON!
THE CASE PROMISES
TO BE A REAL
BAFFLER!

I'LL DO
EVERYTHING
I CAN,
INSPECTOR--
BUT I'M NO
SHERLOCK
HOLMES!



THE WORLD
IS THE POORER
FOR MR. HOLMES'
DEATH, ISN'T
IT?

I SHALL
EVER REGARD
HIM AS THE BEST
AND WISEST MAN
WHOM I HAVE
EVER KNOWN!

CONTINUED ON 5th PAGE FOLLOWING





ACCORDINGLY, I CLIMBED THE WALL BEHIND ME TO AVOID LEAVING FOOTPRINTS ON THE MUDDY PATH. THE GOING WAS TREACHEROUS--A MISTAKE WOULD HAVE BEEN FATAL...



AT LAST I REACHED A TINY CREVICE AND CLUNG THERE, WATCHING YOU EXAMINING THE PATH AND FORMING THE CONCLUSION THAT I HAD PERISHED.



I IMAGINED MY ADVENTURES WERE FINISHED, BUT ANOTHER SURPRISE WAS IN STORE FOR ME. A HUGE ROCK, FALLING FROM ABOVE, BOOMED PAST ME--



A MOMENT LATER, LOOKING UP, I SAW A MAN'S HEAD AGAINST THE DARKENING SKY. MORIARTY HAD NOT BEEN ALONE. I RECOGNIZED THE PROFESSOR'S FRIEND...



...MORIARTY'S SECOND-IN-COMMAND... COLONEL SEBASTIAN MORAN.

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE?



YOU MAY HAVE READ OF THE EXPLORATIONS OF A NORWEGIAN NAMED SIGERSON ... MY HUMBLE SELF.

I MAINTAINED MY DISGUISE UNTIL THE REST OF THE MORIARTY GANG WAS BEHIND BARS.



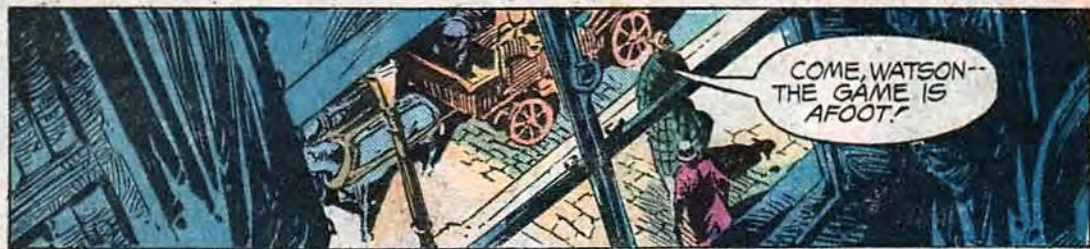


ONLY ONE OF THE MORIARTY GANG REMAINS FREE--THE MOST DANGEROUS ONE--AND WE MAY NET HIM THIS VERY NIGHT!

AND IN SO DOING, WE MAY ALSO SOLVE THE ADAIR MURDER!



YOUR TRUSTY REVOLVER! YOU MAY HAVE NEED OF IT!



COME, WATSON-- THE GAME IS AFOOT!



CABBY! YOU REMEMBER YOUR INSTRUCTIONS?

THAT I DO, MR. HOLMES!



LIKE OLD TIMES, HOLMES! MY PISTOL IN MY POCKET... THE THRILL OF DANGER IN MY HEART!

MIGHT I ASK WHERE WE'RE BOUND?

NOT FAR--



--IN FACT WE'VE ALREADY ARRIVED!

BUT...WE'RE JUST A STREET AWAY FROM YOUR ROOMS!



EXACTLY!
WE TOOK THE CAB
TO DISCOURAGE
ANYONE FROM
FOLLOWING
US!

WE ARE
ENTERING
CAMDEN HOUSE,
WHICH STANDS
OPPOSITE OUR
BAKER STREET
LODGINGS!



DRAW
NEAR THE FRONT
WINDOW, WATSON,
TAKING CARE
NOT TO SHOW
YOURSELF, AND
LOOK ACROSS
THE AVENUE AT
OUR QUARTERS!

WE WILL
SEE IF I
RETAIN MY
ABILITY TO
SURPRISE
YOU!



BY JOVE!
IT'S YOU...
SITTING THERE
IN THE
WINDOW!

NO,
WATSON--



--IT IS A STATUE
OF ME IN WAX,
MOULDED BY
MONSIEUR OSCAR
MELNIER...



...AN
EXCELLENT
LIKENESS!

WHAT IS
THE MEANING
OF ALL THIS?

SIMPLE,
WATSON--



--SIMPLE
WHEN YOU RE-
CALL THE ENEMY
WHO TRIED TO
CRUSH ME WITH
THE ROCK AT
REICHENBACH
FALLS?

HE KNOWS I AM
ALIVE...AND HE MUST
BELIEVE I SHOULD
RETURN TO BAKER
STREET!





GREETINGS, COLONEL MORAN? ATTEMPTING TO FINISH WHAT YOU BEGAN AT REICHENBACH FALLS?

COVER HIM, WATSON!

YOU CUNNING DEVIL--!



YOU'LL NEVER TAKE ME IN!

UNNGH!



YOU WOULDN'T CARE TO BET ON THAT? YOU ARE A BETTING MAN, AREN'T YOU?

EARLIER, I LEARNED THAT YOU PLAYED CARDS WITH THE LATE RONALD ADAIR--!



YOU LOST TO HIM... HEAVILY! YOU FOLLOWED HIM HOME AND IN A FIT OF ANGER, YOU KILLED HIM--

--AS YOU ATTEMPTED TO KILL ME!



IN THAT, I SHALL NOT FAIL... THOUGH I MUST USE MY BARE HANDS!

WRONG, MORAN. YOUR SOUL IS SO WARPED WITH EVIL--



--YOU CANNOT SEE YOUR FLIGHT IS HOPELESS!



YOUR END IS AT HAND, MORAN! YOU'LL SPEND THE REST OF YOUR DAYS IN A CELL--

--OR WAITING FOR A ROPE!



BEAUTIFULLY DONE, HOLMES! HE WON'T WAKE UP FOR A WEEK!

BUT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW HE COULD FIRE THAT RIFLE WITHOUT NOISE!

IT'S NO ORDINARY RIFLE, WATSON--



--RATHER IT IS AN AIR GUN OF EXTREME POWER... ALTERED TO SHOOT A REVOLVER BULLET!



FIENDISHLY CLEVER!

INDEED! HE SHOT ADAIR FROM ROOFTOP... AND AT SUCH A DISTANCE, THE POLICEMAN COULD HEAR NOTHING!



INSPECTOR LESTRADE IS NEARBY! WE'LL INFORM HIM OF COLONEL MORAN'S WHEREABOUTS AND THEN--

AND THEN?



WE SHALL DEVOTE OURSELVES TO EXAMINING THOSE INTERESTING LITTLE PROBLEMS WHICH THE COMPLEX LIFE OF LONDON SO PLENTIFULLY PRESENTS!

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE LAST WEEK IN AUG.

The END