

# SHERLOCK HOLMES *and* The **Mystery** of the **RED-HEADED** **LEAGUE**

IN BAKER STREET, JUST NORTH OF LONDON'S WEST-END,  
LIVED SHERLOCK HOLMES, THE FIRST OF THE GREAT DETECTIVES.

IN THOSE DAYS, TELEPHONES HAD ONLY JUST BEEN INVENTED,  
THERE WAS NO WIRELESS, AND NO MOTOR CARS. MANY OF THE  
THINGS WHICH A DETECTIVE OF TO-DAY TAKES FOR GRANTED AS  
AIDS TO SOLVING HIS CASES, WERE UNKNOWN.

IN THE SOLVING OF THE MANY STRANGE AND BAFFLING MYSTERIES  
THAT CAME HIS WAY, SHERLOCK HOLMES HAD THREE MAIN ASSETS.  
FIRST, HIS BRILLIANT DEDUCTIVE BRAIN, SECOND HIS TOUGH  
WHIP-CORD PHYSIQUE, AND LAST BUT BY NO MEANS LEAST, THE  
LOYAL ASSISTANCE OF HIS FAITHFUL FRIEND, DOCTOR WATSON.

ONE DAY THEY WERE WALKING DOWN BAKER STREET TOGETHER.  
DOCTOR WATSON WAS READING HIS NEWSPAPER.



EVEN IN THOSE DAYS, WHEN TRAFFIC MOVED A GREAT DEAL MORE SLOWLY, IT WAS NOT A GOOD THING TO READ A NEWSPAPER WALKING ALONG THE STREET. DOCTOR WATSON'S ATTENTION TO THE PAPER BECAME FIXED, SUDDENLY, ON ONE PARTICULAR ITEM. SO FIXED, THAT HE ALMOST STEPPED OFF THE KERB UNDER THE WHEELS OF A PASSING CART.



## TO THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE

On account of the bequest of Esekiah Hopkins, of Lebanon, Penn., U.S.A., there is now another vacancy open which entitles a member of the League to a salary of £4 for purely nominal services. All red-headed men who are sound in body and mind, and above twenty-one years of age, are eligible. Apply in person on Monday, at eleven o'clock to Duncan Ross, at the offices of the League, 7, Pope's Court, Fleet Street.

SHERLOCK HOLMES TOOK THE PAPER FROM WATSON, AND AS THEY WENT ON THEIR WAY TOWARDS HIS CHAMBERS, IT BECAME HIS TURN TO BE STRUCK BY THE ODDITY OF THAT ADVERTISEMENT.

"ON ACCOUNT OF THE BEQUEST OF THE LATE..."

WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!



BACK IN THE CHAMBERS AT 221B BAKER STREET, SHERLOCK HOLMES APPEARED TO DISMISS THE MATTER OF THE ADVERTISEMENT FROM HIS MIND, AND BECAME ENGROSSSED AT ONCE IN ONE OF HIS INTERMINABLE CHEMICAL EXPERIMENTS. WATSON, HOWEVER, KEPT GOING BACK TO THE STRANGE ADVERTISEMENT OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE.



MEANWHILE, AT THE ADDRESS WHICH WAS GIVEN AT THE FOOT OF THE ADVERTISEMENT, THE MAN BEHIND THE WHOLE FANTASTIC BUSINESS WAS CONFERRING WITH HIS ASSISTANT, ONE DUNCAN ROSS. ROSS KNEW HIM AS VINCENT SPAULDING. TO OTHER PEOPLE, HE WAS BETTER KNOWN AS JOHN CLAY.



MR. SPAULDING, NEWSPAPER IN HAND, MADE HIS WAY TO WILSON'S BOOK SHOP FOR THE TIME BEING — AND FOR CERTAIN REASONS OF HIS OWN — HE WAS ACTING AS ASSISTANT TO MR. WILSON. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS STORY, THE MOST INTERESTING THING ABOUT MR. WILSON WAS THAT HE HAD A FINE HEAD OF FLAMING RED HAIR.



MAY I GO DOWN TO THE  
CELLAR TO DEVELOP  
SOME PHOTOGRAPHS,  
PLEASE, MR. WILSON?

BAH! ALL  
RIGHT,  
SPAULDING!  
GO AHEAD!



SPAULDING HAD GIVEN HIS EMPLOYER TO UNDERSTAND THAT PHOTOGRAPHY WAS HIS HOBBY. ALL THE SAME, MR. WILSON FELT, HE WAS SPENDING AN AWFUL LOT OF TIME AT IT.

ALWAYS IN THE CELLAR DEVELOPING HIS PICTURES! HE WORKS CHEAP, THOUGH.



SPAULDING?  
ARE YOU FINISHED  
DOWN THERE?

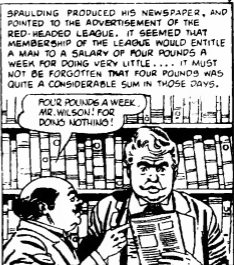
COMING RIGHT UP,  
MR. WILSON!





COME, SPAULDING. THESE BOOKS ARE ALL OUT OF ORDER. WE MUST SORT THEM—

CERTAINLY, SIR! BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU SEEN THE ADVERTISEMENT IN TODAY'S PAPER?



SPAULDING PRODUCED HIS NEWSPAPER, AND POINTED TO THE ADVERTISEMENT OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE. IT SEEMED THAT MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEAGUE WOULD ENTITLE A MAN TO A SALARY OF FOUR POUNDS A WEEK FOR DOING VERY LITTLE. . . . IT MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT FOUR POUNDS WAS QUITE A CONSIDERABLE SUM IN THOSE DAYS.

FOUR POUNDS A WEEK, MR. WILSON! FOR DOING NOTHING!

MR. WILSON WAS A SIMPLE, GULLIBLE MAN -- A FACT OF WHICH SPAULDING WAS WELL AWARE.



"ALL RED-HEADED MEN... ARE ELIGIBLE."

IT DID NOT TAKE HIM LONG TO MAKE UP HIS MIND TO LOCK UP THE SHOP AND MAKE APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP. AFTER ALL, WHAT HAD HE GOT TO LOSE?



I WISH I WAS A RED-HEADED MAN LIKE YOU, SIR!

FOUR POUNDS A WEEK!

IT DID NOT OCCUR TO MR. WILSON THAT HE WAS ALLOWING HIS EMPLOYEE TO TAKE COMPLETE CHARGE OF HIM. TOGETHER THEY HURRIED THROUGH THE STREETS TOWARDS POPE'S COURT, WHERE THE OFFICES OF THE LEAGUE WERE STATED TO BE..... A GREAT MANY OTHER RED-HEADED MEN WERE THERE BEFORE THEM.



THE QUEUE WAS CONSIDERABLE. EVERY SHADE, VARIETY, AND TEXTURE OF RED HAIR WAS REPRESENTED. MR. WILSON AND HIS ASSISTANT JOINED THE QUEUE.



AFTER QUEUING FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME ON RICKETY STAIRS WHICH CREAKED UNDER THE UNACUSTOMED LOAD THEY AT LAST REACHED A DINGY ANTE-ROOM INTO WHICH LIGHT FILTERED THROUGH A CRACKED AND DIRTY WINDOW.

WE WANT TO SEE MR DUNCAN ROSS!

SO DO WE! WAIT YOUR TURN!



MR. DUNCAN ROSS APPEARED A MOMENT LATER, USHERING OUT YET ANOTHER UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANT.

SORRY OLD MAN! YOUR HAIR IS JUST A LITTLE TOO DAZY TO BE CONSIDERED TRILLY RED!

Bah!



MR. ROSS SEEMED TO BE VERY CHOOSEY IN THE MATTER OF RED HAIR. SPAULDING — OR JOHN CLAY, IF YOU LIKE — HAD KNOWN PERFECTLY WELL THAT HE WOULD BE. IF HE HAD CHOSEN TO DO SO. HE COULD HAVE TOLD MR. WILSON EXACTLY WHY DUNCAN ROSS WAS BEING SO PARTICULAR.....

MR. ROSS SEEMS VERY CHOOSEY ABOUT HIS REDHEADS!

YOU DON'T GET FOUR ROUNDS A WEEK FOR BEING JUST SLIGHTLY RED-HEADED!



YOUR TURN NEXT MR WILSON! YOU AREN'T NERVOUS ARE YOU?

WELL NOT ME, SPAULDING!



AT LAST MR. WILSON'S TURN CAME. HE FOUND HIMSELF USHERED INTO ANOTHER ROOM ALMOST AS DINGY AS THE ONE HE HAD BEEN WAITING IN, BUT FURNISHED WITH A DESK, SOME CHAIRS, AND A LOT OF BOOKS ON SHELVES. DUNCAN ROSS WENT TO WORK ON MR. WILSON AT ONCE.



NOW CAME THE "TESTS". MR. WILSON HAD CERTAINLY NOT EXPECTED ANYTHING LIKE THIS.





THE FIRST "TEST" HAVING ESTABLISHED THAT MR. WILSON'S HAIR WAS STRICTLY HIS OWN, AND NOT A WIG, DUNCAN ROSS PASSED ON TO THE SECOND "TEST". AFTER ALL, IT WOULD BE PERFECTLY POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THAT ROSY FLAMING COLOUR WITH THE AID OF DYES.



BY NOW MR. WILSON HAD ALMOST DECIDED THAT THE WHOLE AFFAIR WAS TOO PREPOSTEROUS FOR WORDS.....



.... THEN HE HEARD A NOTE ALMOST OF TRIUMPH ENTER INTO ROSS' VOICE.



MR. WILSON WAS SUCCESSFUL! HE WAS NOW A MEMBER OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE — THE FOUR POUNDS A WEEK WAS HIS!

CONGRATULATIONS, MR. WILSON! YOU HAVE PASSED EVERY TEST OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE!

YOUR HOURS WILL BE FROM TEN TO TWO EVERY DAY! FOR THIS YOU WILL BE PAID FOUR POUNDS A WEEK!

BUT WHAT DO I DO?



THEN DUNCAN ROSS TOLD HIM WHAT HIS TASK WAS TO BE. HE WAS ASTONISHED AT ITS SIMPLICITY.

YOU WILL SIMPLY COPY OUT ALL THE ARTICLES IN THE ENCYCLOPEDIA, MR. WILSON, BEGIN WITH 'A' AND WORK FORWARD!

THIS, THOUGHT MR. WILSON, WAS MONEY FOR NOTHING. FOUR POUNDS A WEEK EXTRA FOR DOING SO LITTLE WOULD MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD TO HIM. MEANWHILE, OF COURSE, HE COULD SAFELY LEAVE THE SHOP IN SPAULDING'S CHARGE.....WHAT THE WORTHY MR. WILSON DID NOT REALIZE WAS THAT THIS WAS PRECISELY WHAT SPAULDING WANTED.

YOU WILL START WORK PROMPTLY AT TEN O'CLOCK TOMORROW, MR. WILSON! GOOD-BYE!



MR. WILSON WALKED DOWN THE STAIRS INTO POPE'S COURT FEELING WELL PLEASED WITH HIMSELF. THE ARRANGEMENT WAS A QUEER ONE CERTAINLY, BUT WHO WAS HE TO QUARREL WITH FOUR POUNDS A WEEK?

SEEMS LIKE AN ODD ARRANGEMENT, SPAULDING! COPYING THE ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR FOUR HOURS A DAY!

ANY ARRANGEMENT THAT PAYS FOUR POUNDS A WEEK IS A GOOD ARRANGEMENT!

THE VERY NEXT MORNING.....

I'VE GOT TO REPORT AT THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE, VINCENT! WATCH THE SHOP!

AND SO FROM THEN ON, EVERY MORNING, MR. WILSON MADE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE. AND EVERY MORNING, AS SOON AS HE WAS GONE, SPAULDING WOULD LOCK THE SHOP DOOR, AND GO DOWN TO THE CELLAR, WHERE HE BUSIED HIMSELF WITH DIGGING A TUNNEL — A TUNNEL THE DIRECTION AND LOCATION OF WHICH HE HAD WORKED OUT VERY CAREFULLY INDEED DURING THE PRECEDING WEEKS.

AND NOW I CAN GO TO MY WORK!

"I'M THE MAN WHO BROKE THE BANK AT MONTE CARLO!"

SO THE WEEKS WENT BY, AND MR. SPAULDING PERSEVERED WITH HIS TUNNEL. HE HAD LITTLE FEAR THAT MR. WILSON WOULD DISCOVER IT DURING THE FEW HOURS THAT HE WAS IN THE OFFICE, FOR MR. WILSON'S RHEUMATICS MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO DESCEND TO THE CELLAR. AND DURING THE HOURS WHEN THE NOISE OF DIGGING MIGHT HAVE ATTRACTED HIS ATTENTION, MR. WILSON WAS SAFELY AT WORK IN THE OFFICES OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE.

THIS IS TIRING WORK, COPYING THE ENCYCLOPEDIA, MR. BOSS!



TWO MONTHS LATER.....

WHEW! I'VE COPIED THE ENCYCLOPEDIA ALL THE WAY UP TO "BARRACUDA"

YOU HAVE DONE SPLENDIDLY, MR. WILSON! AND HERE ARE YOUR FOUR POUNDS FOR YOUR EIGHTH WEEK OF WORK!



AND A FEW DAYS LATER, DURING THE NINTH WEEK OF MR. WILSON'S LABOURS, MR. SPAULDING, ALIAS JOHN CLAY, REACHED HIS OBJECTIVE. THE TUNNEL HAD GONE AS FAR AS IT COULD GO. THERE, FOR THE MOMENT, THE MATTER MUST REST. NOW, JOHN CLAY KNEW, IT WAS A MATTER OF BIDDING HIS TIME FOR THE OPPORTUNITY WHICH HE KNEW MUST COME SOON — THE OPPORTUNITY TO STEAL A FORTUNE.

FINISHED AT LAST!



THE DAYS WORE ON, AND THEN ONE MORNING WHEN MR. WILSON ARRIVED AT POPE'S COURT.....



INDIGNANTLY HE SOUGHT OUT THE CARETAKER.

I WORK FOR THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE!  
WHAT HAPPENED TO MR. ROSS?

HE MOVED LAST NIGHT--  
LOCK, STOCK AND  
BARREL!



THERE AIN'T NO USE TRYING TO TRACE HIM, EITHER! HE GAVE A FALSE NAME!



STILL IN A STATE OF HIGH DUDGEON MR. WILSON HURRIED BACK TO HIS LITTLE BOOK-SHOP. THERE HE FOUND HIS ASSISTANT, SPAULDING, PLAYING TO PERFECTION THE PART OF A BOOK-SELLERS' ASSISTANT.

SPAULDING! THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE HAS DISAPPEARED!  
DUNCAN ROSS HAS VANISHED!



REALLY, IT WAS ALL THAT VINCENT SPAULDING COULD DO TO STOP HIMSELF LAUGHING OUT LOUD. AFTER ALL, HE KNEW A LOT MORE ABOUT THIS PARTICULAR "JOKE" THAN MR. WILSON DID.

ROSS CAN'T BE TRACED! HE GAVE A FALSE NAME!

WHY WORRY ABOUT IT? YOU WERE PAID WELL FOR YOUR TIME, MR WILSON!

I'VE BEEN MADE A FOOL OF! AND I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!



MR. WILSON MADE STRAIGHT FOR THE NEAREST POLICE STATION, AND WHILE THE WORTHY SERGEANT ON DUTY AT THE DESK COULD DO NOTHING TO HELP HIM PERSONALLY, HE DID GIVE HIM ONE PIECE OF EXCELLENT ADVICE.

THIS ISN'T A CRIME, SIR! THIS IS SOME SORT OF PRACTICAL JOKE! WHY NOT GO TO MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES? HE LIKES NONSENSE!

AND THEY HAD A SIGN ON THE DOOR SAYING THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE IS DISSOLVED!



"GO TO SHERLOCK HOLMES: ... THE VERY THING."

BY GEORGE! I WILL GO TO SHERLOCK HOLMES!



BY THE TIME HE ARRIVED AT BAKER STREET, MR. WILSON WAS EVEN MORE INDIGNANT.

I MUST SEE SHERLOCK HOLMES AT ONCE!

HE'S BUSY! WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE HIM ABOUT?



SHERLOCK HOLMES' LAND-LADY, MRS. HUDSON, WAS NOT ONE TO BE RUFFLED BY EXCITED CALLERS. SHE HAD SEEN FAR TOO MANY OF THEM FOR THAT. THIS ONE WAS NO WORSE THAN A LOT SHE HAD KNOWN, BABBLING HIS NONSENSE ABOUT THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE.

TELL HIM IT'S ABOUT THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE!



THEN A CLIPPED, CLEAR VOICE SOUNDED FROM THE LANDING ABOVE.

MRS. HUDSON! SHOW THE GENTLEMAN IN AT ONCE!



THE RECOLLECTION OF THAT CURIOUS ADVERTISEMENT HE HAD SEEN IN THE PAPER OVER TWO MONTHS AGO HAD REMAINED FILED AWAY IN AN ODD CORNER OF SHERLOCK HOLMES' ASTONISHING MEMORY. IT HAD BEEN A CURIOUS ADVERTISEMENT, AND HE FELT THAT WILSON'S STORY WAS A FITTING SEQUEL TO IT..

MR HOLMES,  
MY NAME IS  
JABEZ WILSON! I OWN A BOOK-  
SHOP IN COBURG STREET! I LIVE  
UPSTAIRS OVER THE SHOP!

PRAY CONTINUE!

... AND THEN ONE MORNING, MR.  
HOLMES, ROSS AND THE LEAGUE  
HAD DISAPPEARED!

BUT HE PAID  
YOU EVERY  
WEEK, DIDN'T  
HE?

... BUT THE FINAL CHAPTER OF THE STRANGE  
STORY WAS YET TO BE WRITTEN. SHERLOCK  
HOLMES HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT HE WOULD  
TAKE A PERSONAL HAND IN THE WRITING OF IT.

HE DID! BUT I STILL FEEL  
THAT I HAVE BEEN  
VICTIMIZED!

I FEEL THAT  
YOU HAVE,  
TOO!

FROM MR. WILSON'S STORY ONE  
THING APPEARED CLEAR TO  
SHERLOCK HOLMES. SOMEBODY  
HAD GONE TO CONSIDERABLE  
TROUBLE TO GET MR. WILSON OUT OF  
HIS OWN SHOP FOR A NUMBER OF  
HOURS EVERY DAY. WHY? THAT WAS  
WHAT HE MEANT TO FIND OUT.

WHO LOOKS  
AFTER YOUR  
BOOKSHOP  
NOW, MR.  
WILSON?

MY ASSISTANT,  
VINCENT SPAULDING!  
HE'S NOT MUCH OF  
A WORKER BUT HE  
WORKS FOR HALF  
THE REGULAR  
WAGES!



THEY TOOK A HANSON CAB, AND A QUARTER OF AN HOUR'S RATTLING RIDE OVER THE STONE SETS WHICH THEN PAVED MANY OF LONDON'S STREETS, BROUGHT THEM TO COBURG STREET.



WE WILL TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR SHOP FIRST, MR. WILSON!



THERE IT IS, SIR! COBURG STREET ISN'T MUCH OF A STREET, BUT IT'S THE BEST I CAN AFFORD!

SHERLOCK HOLMES LED THE WAY INTO THE SHOP. HE COULD SEE NOBODY IN IT.



SINGULAR! YOUR SHOP IS OPEN, BUT I DON'T SEE YOUR ASSISTANT!

MR. WILSON CALLED FOR SPAULDING. IT WAS PERHAPS A LITTLE UNFORTUNATE FOR THAT CHARACTER THAT HE HAD CHOSEN THIS PARTICULAR TIME TO INSPECT HIS HANDIWORK IN THE CELLAR BELOW.



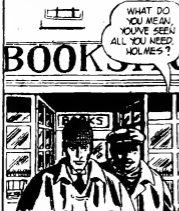
MR HOLMES, THIS IS MY ASSISTANT, VINCENT SPAULDING!

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING! I WAS DEVELOPING PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE CELLAR!

"...DEVELOPING PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE CELLAR". MOST OTHER PEOPLE WOULD HAVE TAKEN SPAULDING'S WORD. BUT NOT SHERLOCK HOLMES. IT WAS HIS HABIT TO LOOK FOR DETAILS WHICH WOULD PROVE THE TRUTH OF ANYTHING HE WAS TOLD. IF SPAULDING HAD BEEN DEVELOPING PHOTOGRAPHS, THEN HE SHOULD SHOW SIGNS OF IT — STAINS — ON HIS FINGERS. BUT SPAULDING DID NOT. THE ONLY "SIGNS" OF HIS RECENT ACTIVITIES WERE ON THE KNEES OF HIS TROUSERS..... SHERLOCK HOLMES NOTED WITH INTEREST, THEREFORE, THAT MR. SPAULDING WAS A LIAR.



SO SPAULDING OBVIOUSLY HAD SOMETHING TO HIDE, THOUGHT SHERLOCK HOLMES, AND FROM THE KNEES OF HIS TROUSERS HE HAD A PRETTY GOOD IDEA OF THE NATURE OF SPAULDING'S SECRET. WATSON, HOWEVER, WAS BAFLED.



HIS BAFFLEMENT WAS FURTHER INCREASED WHEN SHERLOCK HOLMES AND HE GOT INTO THE ROAD OUTSIDE.





THIS STREET IS RATHER DIFFERENT FROM ITS POOR NEIGHBOUR COBURG STREET, ISN'T IT, WATSON?

IF COBURG STREET OFFERED LITTLE TO ATTRACT A CRIMINAL, THE STREET BEHIND IT WAS VERY DIFFERENT.



A STREET OF SPLENDID SHOPS! JEWELERS, FURRIERS, ART DEALERS...



I THINK WE MAY SAFELY ASSUME THAT NOTHING OF INTEREST TO A CRIMINAL LIES IN FRONT OF MR. WILSON'S BOOK-SHOP. NOW LET US SEE WHAT LIES BEHIND IT.

SHERLOCK HOLMES WALKED SWIFTLY ALONG, COUNTING EVERY PACE HE TOOK. NOBODY WHO WATCHED HIM WALKING SO SWIFTLY WOULD HAVE GUESSED THAT HE WAS PIN-POINTING AN EXACT SPOT....



AHA, MY DEAR WATSON — A BANK!

SHERLOCK HOLMES ASKED AT ONCE TO SEE THE BANK MANAGER.

MAY I HELP YOU, GENTLEMEN?

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. I AM SHERLOCK HOLMES... I WONDER IF I MIGHT LOOK OUT OF ONE OF THE WINDOWS AT THE BACK OF YOUR BUILDING?

THE MANAGER, THOUGH BEWILDERED, WAS ONLY TOO HAPPY TO OBLIGE HIS FAMOUS CALLER.

THERE YOU ARE! BUT THERE'S NOTHING TO SEE EXCEPT THE BACK OF THAT TAWDRY OLD BOOKSHOP!

QUITE! COME, WATSON!

WASTING NO TIME, SHERLOCK HOLMES LED THE WAY OUT OF THE MANAGER'S OFFICE.

WHERE TO NOW HOLMES?

'TO A CONCERT!' I WANT TO THINK!

THAT NIGHT HOLMES AND WATSON ATTENDED A CONCERT. THE MUSIC, HOWEVER, MEANT NOTHING MORE TO HOLMES THAT EVENING THAN A BACKGROUND FOR HIS THOUGHTS.

IT'S ALL SO CLEAR! THE BOOKSHOP, WILSON, THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE...

REALLY, HOLMES! SW-H-W!

BY THE TIME THE CONCERT WAS OVER EVERYTHING WAS CLEAR TO SHERLOCK HOLMES . . . . WHICH WAS A GREAT DEAL MORE THAN COULD HAVE BEEN SAID FOR THE FAITHFUL DOCTOR WATSON.

GO HOME AT ONCE, WATSON! A SERIOUS CRIME IS AFOOT!

I SHALL MEET YOU AT BAKER STREET AT TEN TONIGHT! HAVE YOUR REVOLVER WITH YOU!

AND THAT'S IT, MRS. HUDSON! RED-HEADED LEAGUE, BOOKSHOP, TV JUMPING ON THE SIDE WALK! WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?



IT JUST DON'T MAKE SENSE, SIR!

MEANWHILE SHERLOCK HOLMES WAS MAKING A NUMBER OF VISITS INCLUDING ONE TO SCOTLAND YARD.

WELCOME TO SCOTLAND YARD, MR. HOLMES!

THANK YOU! I SHOULD LIKE TO SEE INSPECTOR LESTRADE!



HOLMES MADE HIS EXPLANATIONS TO INSPECTOR LESTRADE, AND THOUGH THAT WORTHY WAS RELUCTANT TO BE DRAGGED OUT OF THE MORE ROUTINE PATHS OF POLICE DUTY, NONE THE LESS HE KNEW SHERLOCK HOLMES TOO WELL TO IGNORE HIM. AND SHERLOCK HOLMES SAID THAT AN ATTEMPT WOULD BE MADE TO ROB AN IMPORTANT LONDON BANK... THAT WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR LESTRADE.



THEY ARRIVED AT BAKER STREET TWENTY MINUTES LATER.



SHERLOCK HOLMES PAUSED IN THE HALLWAY WHILE WATSON PUT ON HIS CAP. HE POINTED TO A NEWSPAPER LYING ON THE HALL TABLE.



BEFORE THEY LEFT, LESTRADE READ THE PARAGRAPH IN THE PAPER. IT CONCERNED THE DEPOSITING OF AN UNUSUALLY LARGE QUANTITY OF CURRENCY IN A LONDON BANK.



UP TO NOW LESTRADE'S BRAIN HAD NOT FULLY GRASPED EVERYTHING WHICH SHERLOCK HOLMES HAD EXPLAINED TO HIM, BUT BY NOW THE CLUES WERE BEGINNING TO DROP INTO PLACE.

WE'RE PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES 30,000 POUNDS AND THE MOST VICIOUS THIEF AND KILLER IN ENGLAND!



"THE MOST VICIOUS THIEF AND KILLER IN ENGLAND": TO LESTRADE THAT COULD ONLY MEAN ONE MAN.

JOHN CLAY! WHAT I'D GIVE TO GET MY HANDS ON THE BLACKGUARD!



OUTSIDE THE BANK SHERLOCK HOLMES MADE A FINAL CHECK TO ENSURE THAT EVERYTHING WAS AS HE WISHED IT TO BE.

YOU HAVE YOUR RE-VOLVER WATSON?

THE SAME ONE I CARRIED IN INDIA, HOLMES! IT HASN'T FAILED ME YET!



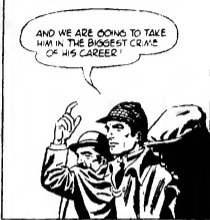


THEY ADVANCED TOWARDS THE BANK



DON'T HESITATE TO USE IT! JOHN CLAY IS AS DEADLY AS A COBRA!

SHERLOCK HOLMES RANG THE NIGHT BELL, AND AS THEY WAITED....



AND WE ARE GOING TO TAKE HIM IN THE BIGGEST CRIME OF HIS CAREER!

APART FROM HIS VISIT TO SCOTLAND YARD, AS YOU KNOW, SHERLOCK HOLMES HAD MADE OTHER CALLS..... HIS WAS A NAME WHICH CARRIED WEIGHT IN THAT DAY AND AGE..... ANYONE, THE GOVERNORS OF BANKS INCLUDED, LISTENED WITH RESPECT WHEN HIS NAME WAS MENTIONED.



I HAVE ORDERS TO ADMIT YOU TO THE BANK'S VAULT, MR. HOLMES!



THERE'S 30,000 POUNDS IN THIS VAULT TO BE SHIPPED TO FRANCE TOMORROW! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

YOU'LL FIND OUT IN THE MORNING!

EXCITED AND AGITATED, THE BANK MANAGER CONDUCTED SHERLOCK HOLMES, WATSON AND INSPECTOR LESTRADE TO THE VAULTS OF THE BANK, AND THEN RETIRED TO HIS OWN QUARTERS TO WAIT AND TO WONDER. THE THREE MEN IN THE VAULTS BELOW BEGAN A LONG VIGIL. THEN THE EVENT WHICH SHERLOCK HOLMES HAD BEEN AWAITING HAPPENED. FIRST CAME A STEADY SCRATCHING SOUND, AND THEN THE TIP OF A CROW BAR BROKE THROUGH THE WALL



TENSELY, THE THREE WAITED, HIDDEN FROM SIGHT BY A NICHE IN THE WALL. THEY WAITED WHILE THE BANK ROBBERS QUICKLY ENLARGED THE HOLE, SLAB BY SLAB UNTIL IT WAS LARGE ENOUGH FOR A MAN TO STEP THROUGH. THEN AN ARM APPEARED, AND THE LIGHT OF A LANTERN WAS ADDED TO THE FEEBLE GLOW OF THE GAS JET WHICH BURNED NIGHT AND DAY IN ONE CORNER OF THE VAULT.



A MOMENT LATER THE FACE OF VINCENT SPAULDING, ALIAS JOHN CLAY, APPEARED IN THE OPENING.



DUNCAN ROSS FOLLOWED HIM. THE TWO FOUNDERS OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE HAD REACHED THE GOAL THEY HAD PLOTTED FOR ALL THESE LONG WEEKS.



AT THIS POINT LESTRADE WOULD HAVE STEPPED FORWARD, BUT SHERLOCK HOLMES PRESSED HIM BACK INTO THE SHADOWS. HE WANTED THE THIEVES TO INCRIMINATE THEMSELVES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. TO CHARGE THEM WITH BREAKING AND ENTERING WAS ONE THING — TO CATCH THEM RED-HANDED WITH THEIR LOOT WAS ANOTHER. SOON THE BIG PORTMANTEAU WAS FULL OF NEW CURRENCY, DESTINED FOR THE FRENCH BOURSE.



WE'RE RICH FOR LIFE ROSS! ALL BECAUSE I FIGURED OUT THAT ONE RED-HEADED MAN PLUS ONE RED-HEADED MAN EQUALS 30,000 POUNDS!



LET'S GO! IN AN HOUR WE'LL BE AT SEA WITH ENOUGH MONEY TO LAST US FOR LIFE!

THE RASCALLY PAIR STEPPED BACK TOWARDS THE TUNNEL. SHERLOCK HOLMES PREPARED TO ACT..... WHEN ONE OF THEM WAS CLIMBING THROUGH THE GAP AND THE OTHER WAITING BEHIND, THEN THEY WOULD BE MOST VULNERABLE..... BUT BEFORE THEY REACHED THIS POINT, WATSON TOOK MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS.

HIS PISTOL WAVED AROUND FROM CLAY TO COVER ROSS, AND HE MOVED FORWARD. IT WAS A FATAL MISTAKE — AND ONE OF WHICH JOHN CLAY TOOK INSTANT ADVANTAGE.



ONE MOMENT GENTLEMEN!



DON'T SHOOT, LESTRADE! YOU'LL HIT WATSON!

ROSS SNATCHED UP THE REVOLVER AS IT FELL FROM WATSON'S NERVELESS FINGERS, AND DIVED THROUGH THE OPENING. CLAY THRUST WATSON SAVAGELY AT HOLMES AND LESTRADE, AND FOLLOWED.

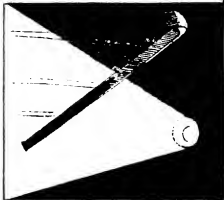
BUT AS SHERLOCK HOLMES SHOWED HIMSELF IN THE OPENING, ROSS FIRED BACK AT HIM. THE BULLET WHINED OVER HIS SHOULDER AND PIERCED THE CROWN OF LESTRADE'S BOWLER, CAUSING HIM TO DIVE FOR COVER. THEN, AS THE SOUND OF RETREATING FOOTSTEPS ECHOED FROM THE TUNNEL, SHERLOCK HOLMES, ARMED ONLY WITH THE CROW-BAR, DARTED AFTER THE TWO DESPERATE MEN.



SUDDENLY A DAZZLING LIGHT STABBED OUT OF THE DARKNESS AHEAD.



FOR A SPLIT SECOND HOLMES STOOD MOTIONLESS, LIKE A STATUE, THE LIGHT GLARING INTO HIS EYES..... IT WAS AT ABOUT WAIST LEVEL. ROSS — IT MUST BE HE, FOR HOLMES HAD NOT RECOGNISED THE VOICE AS JOHN CLAY'S — WOULD MOST LIKELY BE HOLDING THE LIGHT IN HIS LEFT HAND, AND A GUN IN HIS RIGHT. HOLMES MADE A LIGHTNING MENTAL CALCULATION OF THE PROBABLE POSITION OF THE MAN'S HEAD..... THEN THE CROW-BAR WHIRLED OUT OF HIS HAND LIKE A BOOMERANG.



HIS AIM WAS UNERRING.....



THE LANTERN FELL TO THE FLOOR, AND IN ITS LIGHT HOLMES GLIMPSED THE SCURRYING FIGURE OF JOHN CLAY.



SHERLOCK HOLMES' LONG LEGS CARRIED HIM OVER THE GROUND  
IN LONG BOUNDING STRIDES . . . . .



FROM A COUPLE OF PAGES BEHIND THE  
PODGY LITTLE CROOK,  
HOLMES LEAPT LIKE  
A PANTHER, AND HIS  
HANDS CLUTCHED AT  
JOHN CLAY'S LEGS,  
DRAGGED FORWARD  
BY THE WEIGHT OF  
THE BAG OF STOLEN  
MONEY, JOHN CLAY  
PITCHED FORWARD,  
AND HIS HEAD  
CRASHED INTO ONE  
OF THE WOODEN PROPS  
WHICH HE HIMSELF  
HAD PUT INTO  
POSITION TO SUPPORT  
THE ROOF OF HIS TUNNEL.  
A BLINDING LIGHT  
FLASHED IN HIS EYES,  
AND JOHN CLAY  
KNEW NO MORE.



SHERLOCK HOLMES CALLED TO WATSON AND LESTRADE, WHO WERE ALREADY CLAMBERING THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE BANK-Vault WALL BEHIND HIM. HE WAS EMERGING THROUGH THE TRAP DOOR FROM THE BOOK SHOP CELLAR BY THE TIME WATSON AND LESTRADE CAUGHT UP WITH HIM.



MR. HOLMES! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

AS LESTRADE AND WATSON CLIMBED THROUGH THE TRAP DOOR AFTER SHERLOCK HOLMES, MR. WILSON WAS BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND A LOT OF THINGS WHICH HAD BEEN PUZZLING HIM.

WHY, THAT'S MR. DUNCAN ROSS, THE PRESIDENT OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE!

GO BACK TO BED, MR. WILSON! THE MYSTERY OF THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE IS SOLVED!



AND SO THE CLATTERING HOOPS OF THE HORSES PULLING THE BLACK MARIA WHICH CARRIED THE TWO CROOKS AWAY MARKED THE END OF YET ANOTHER TRIUMPH FOR MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES — THE FIRST OF THE DETECTIVES.

