

A Wayne Scott • LifeHouse Production

# SHERLOCK HOLMES Faces Death

An Original Adaptation with  
Script and Theme Music by  
WAYNE ROBERT SCOTT

*Based Upon the Classic Detective Series  
And Incidents From "The Sign of Four" (1980)  
"The Final Problem" (1893), "The Gloria Scott" (1892), and "The Valley of Fear" (1914),  
And the Adventures of "The Dying Detective" (1913), ) and "The Six Napoleons" (1904)  
by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

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## “Sherlock Holmes Faces Death”

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

<b>Sherlock Holmes</b>	Private Consulting Detective
<b>Dr. John H. Watson</b>	Holmes' Friend and Chronicler
<b>Stamford</b>	Old Medical Acquaintance of Holmes and Watson
<b>Newsboy</b>	Purveyor of “Strand” Magazine and Newspapers
<b>Inspector Lestrade</b>	Of Scotland Yard
<b>Mrs. Hudson</b>	Baker Street Landlady
<b>Staples</b>	A Skittish Servant
<b>Culverton Smith</b>	Cunning Young Scientist
<b>Professor Moriarty</b>	Criminal Mastermind and Homes' Archenemy
<b>Judge Stamford</b>	Younger Stamford's Father
<b>Maid</b>	Stamford Estate Servant
<b>Colonel Sebastian Moran</b>	Wiley Henchman to Moriarty
<b>Innkeeper</b>	Of Swiss Chalet
<b>Beppo Venucci</b>	A Thief
<b>Horace Harker</b>	Newspaper Editor
<b>Hilda Morse</b>	Shop Owner
<b>Mason Gelder</b>	Sculpture Works Manager
<b>Newsboy II</b>	Purveyor of Central Press Times
<b>Miss Laura Brown</b>	Elderly Local Resident
<b>Samuel Sandeford</b>	Eccentric Collector

#### Londoners:

Constable  
Doctor  
“Porlock” (Victim)

Various Vendors: Flowers, Shoeshine, Vegetables, Dairy, etc.

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## ACT I

### Overture (“Theme for ‘Sherlock Holmes’”)

*(As overture transitions to strains of a violin solo, Holmes is seen— as a shadowy figure— playing his violin within his Baker Street study. Various Londoners are seen passing in the “street” audience area. Among the activities, newsboys hawk papers and magazines, notably “Strand Magazine,” a man receives a shoeshine from an urchin, a girl sells flowers, others buy the paper and flowers, a pocket is picked by another urchin and a constable gives chase. As the following dialogue and action ensues, Holmes lays aside the violin— as per the underscore— and, still in the shadow, he is seen working with chemicals and consulting books. Watson approaches the Baker Street Study door from “street area,” carrying his doctor’s bag and another small bag. London pedestrians continue to be seen)*

*(Musical underscore continues)*

### SCENE 1: BAKER STREET, LONDON

**Watson** *(About to ascend study stairs)* Hmm, I don’t like the sound of that violin today... *(He climbs the steps and stops)* No. It doesn’t sound good at all. I’ll come back after a walk in the park... *(He proceeds down steps toward audience and is surprised by:)*

**Stamford** *(Calling from mainstage “street”)* Watson!... Watson!... *(Watson turns and joins Stamford)*

**Watson** Stamford? Stamford? What a pleasant surprise! *(Shaking Stamford’s hand)* Fancy our meeting up here again! My, but it’s good to see you— jolly good!

**Stamford** You too, old friend.

**Watson** Good Lord! It’s been awhile.

**Stamford** Too long, I’m afraid.

**Watson** I’m sorry to have been so out of touch, old boy.

**Stamford** The fault is equally mine. As a matter of fact, I was in the area— *(Holds up his own doctor’s bag)* — on my own house calls— and I thought as I was so close to Baker Street, I had better drop in and see my old medical school chum over here at 221 B.

**Watson** I’m so glad you did.

**Stamford** Are you? I was afraid we might not be on speaking terms.

**Watson** That’s silly. Why wouldn’t we be?

**Stamford** On account that I’m the one who introduced you to your fellow lodger— Sherlock Holmes.

**Watson** *(Laughing)* Oh that!

**Stamford** I’ll wager your life hasn’t been the same since.

**Watson** Indeed not!

*(Violin music ends)*

*(Total blackout on Study. Lights rise dimly on Study)  
(Holmes conducts “experiments” and consults books)*

**Stamford** I’ve reproached myself ever since for throwing him into your world.

**Watson** *(Chuckling)* You mean throwing me into his world!... An amazing world of precise deduction and astonishing analysis.

**Stamford** Some people think he’s as mad as a hatter.

**Watson** On, no. Quite the contrary. As a matter of fact—

**Newsboy** *(Interrupting)* Strand Magazine! Hot off the press! Get your latest Strand Magazine! “Case of the Missing Norwood Architect Solved by Sherlock Holmes!” Strand Magazine!

**Watson** Here, boy! *(Handing him coin)* I’ll have another.

**Newsboy** Thank you, sir! (*Handing Watson magazine*) And good morning, Doctor Watson. A real pleasure to serve you sir!

**Watson** You know me?

**Newsboy** Of course, sir! From the magazine! Ain't you the one who writes about the cases of your associate, Mr. Holmes? (*Holding up open magazine to Watson*) Ain't this your picture and your name?

**Watson** Why, yes it is.

**Newsboy** (*Shaking Watson's hand vigorously*) A real pleasure, sir! Your stories about Mr. Holmes and his cases are the talk of London—and good for sales! Thank you again, sir! (*Walking off*) Strand Magazine! Sherlock Holmes cracks another case! Read all about it... Etc. (*Continuing out in audience*)

**Stamford** Well, well! I had no idea you have become such a famous celebrity.

**Watson** Oh, no—no—nothing of the sort.

**Newsboy** (*Responding to Stamford's gaze*) Well... a little famous perhaps.

**Stamford** So! Your life really has changed since I introduced you to Holmes.

**Watson** Quite a change indeed. Extraordinary. And I have you to thank. When I returned from my tour of duty as a surgeon in the Afghanistan War on account of the bullet I took in my shoulder, I was at wit's end. Here I was with only a meager military pension and nowhere to turn.

**Stamford** Aha! That's when I happened along here at Baker Street and found you searching for someone to share the expense of room and board. I believe that's when I told you about this strange fellow I knew from my work at the hospital.

**Watson** Sherlock Holmes.

**Stamford** A very odd man. He was always dropping in at the chemical lab and the day I met up with you, he remarked that he also was looking for someone to share the expense of lodgings.

**Watson** Good heavens! It was exactly a year ago today that you introduced me to Holmes. (*Inspector Lestrade and constable enter Study and as lights rise, they consult Holmes*)

**Stamford** Oh my! Has it really been a year?

**Watson** Yes. I know the date because I've just returned from a week-long holiday with some of my cronies from the war. We planned our reunion so it would conclude on the one-year anniversary of our return here to London, \_\_\_\_\_ (*Gives date of day's performance*)

**Stamford** Well, I hope it's been an agreeable year, dear fellow. Have you recovered from your wound?

**Watson** Oh, pretty much. (*Rubbing injured shoulder*) A little stiffness, perhaps.

**Stamford** I dare say you're still as thin as a broomstick. I believe you're thinner now than in our medical school days.

**Watson** Well, our landlady—Mrs. Hudson—has been doing her best to fatten me up, but Holmes keeps me hopping with all his exploits and adventures.

**Stamford** No doubt he does. I'll have to pay more attention to Strand Magazine and keep up with my famous friends. (*Taking Watson's copy to examine*) I had no idea what Holmes was up to when I saw him at the chemical lab and now I see crime is his game.

**Watson** Oh, it's more than a game, I assure you. It's his passion... his obsession... his life!

**Stamford** Well, I shouldn't be surprised. When I first got to know him, he was of help to my own family. He applied his steel trap mind to a painful problem we faced. Quite a caper it was! Holmes will have to tell you about it some time.

**Watson** Yes, indeed.

**Stamford** My family has always been grateful to Holmes for his help, and my father believed he was destined for greatness. Although, I still contend he's a bit bizarre.

**Watson** Holmes is, shall we say, an acquired taste. He may be eccentric—in fact, I shall grant that he is eccentric—but he's an extraordinarily interesting fellow. He has made observation an exact science and from his keen observations he is able to deduce facts in an astonishing manner.

(*Music begins*)

**Watson** His amazing abilities are so sought-after, that all sorts of people from all walks of life come to see him. (*As Lestrade concludes his consultation with Holmes and exits Study with constable*) Indeed, officials of Scotland Yard itself regularly consult him. I shall never forget the day I finally mustered the courage to approach Holmes about his many visitors and to inquire about the nature of his mysterious occupation...  
(*Stamford freezes in dim light as Watson walks into and lights rise upon*)

## SCENE 2: THE STUDY OF 221 B BAKER STREET

- Holmes** (*Turning to Watson and lighting a pipe*) Well, my good doctor. I hope you have found your stay in these humble lodgings comfortable this far... especially after all you have been through...
- Watson** I beg your pardon?
- Holmes** The war, man, the war! I perceive you have been in Afghanistan.
- Watson** How on earth do you know that? It is as if I am lodging with a magician. If I may be so bold, sir... what is your occupation? The chemicals... the visitors... all the things you seem to know...
- Holmes** My work consists solely of observation, analysis, and deduction. These are the tools with which I work and I find them extremely practical. So practical—I can depend upon them for my bread and cheese.
- (Music fades)*
- Watson** But how?
- Holmes** Well, I do have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the world at present. I'm what you might call a consulting detective. Here in London we have lots of government detectives and plenty of private ones. When these fellows are at a loss, they come to me and I manage to put them on the right scent. Take the well known detective, Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard. He got himself into a fog recently over a forgery case, and that is what brought him here.
- Watson** And the other people who have come?
- Holmes** They are all people who are in trouble about something and want a little enlightenment. I listen to their story, they listen to my comments, and then I pocket my fee.
- Watson** But, do you mean to say that without leaving this room, you can unravel some knot which other men can make nothing of— even though they have seen every detail for themselves?
- Holmes** Quite so. I have to bustle about and see things with my own eyes. Observation with me is second nature. You appeared to be surprised when I told you that you had come from Afghanistan.
- Watson** You were told, no doubt.
- Holmes** Nothing of the sort. I knew you came from Afghanistan. The train of reasoning ran: Here is a gentleman with a medical bag, but with the disciplined stride of a military man used to marching. Clearly an army doctor, then. He has just come from the tropics, for his face is dark, and that is not the natural tint of his skin, for his wrists are fair. He has undergone hardship and sickness, as his haggard face and tired eyes revealed clearly. His left arm had been injured, for he holds it in a still and unnatural manner. Where in the tropics could an English army doctor have seen much hardship and got his arm wounded? Why, the recent and well-known Battle of Maiwand in the Afghan War. Clearly, you came from Afghanistan. The whole train of thought did not occupy a second. I remarked you came from Afghanistan and you were astonished.
- Watson** It is, indeed amazingly simple enough as you explain it.
- Holmes** Indeed!... It is! ( *pacing* ) But, it is my business to know what other people do not know. Detection is, and ought to be, an exact science. I know what others do not know because I take systematic note of details. It had long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important. No man lives, or has ever lived, who has brought the same amount of study and natural talent to the detection of crime which I have done. It is fortunate for the citizens of London that I am not a criminal!
- Watson's Voice** (*As Watson reflects and reacts*) This fellow may be very clever. But he is certainly very conceited! I looked out the window now, pondering whether I should continue lodging with such a braggart. I was finding him rather annoying and was about to change the subject, when he seemed to read my mind...
- Holmes** But I am in a dreadful mood. Please forgive me, my friend. It's simply that— just now there has been very little crime to detect— or, at most— some bungling villainy with a motive so transparent that even a Scotland Yard official can see through it. My life seems to be spent in one long effort to escape the commonplaces of existence. I thrive on problems to solve and challenges to conquer, so I am at loose ends today. Hopefully a new problem will arise soon— before I suffer terminal boredom.
- Watson** Well, perhaps I have just the thing to keep your faculties engaged. Would you think me impertinent if I were to put your deductive powers to a test?
- Holmes** I should be delighted to look into any problem which you might submit to me.



**Watson** You have said that you know what others do not know because of your attention to details... details that a trained observer might read.

**Holmes** Quite so.

**Watson** I have here a watch which has recently come into my possession. Would you kindly give me your opinion on the character or habits of the late owner? (*Hands pocket watch to Holmes, who scrutinizes it accordingly*)

**Watson's Voice** I gave him the watch with a slight feeling of amusement in my heart because this test was, I thought, an impossible one and I hoped it might help curb the tone of arrogance he occasionally assumed. He balanced the watch in his hand, gazed at its dial, opened the back, examined the works, and studied it first with his naked eyes, and then, with his large convex lens. I could hardly keep from smiling at his crestfallen face...

**Holmes** There is hardly any information that may be discerned. The watch has been recently cleaned, which robs me of my most suggestive facts.

**Watson** Yes, I'm afraid it was cleaned before being sent to me. (*Watson sits*)

**Watson's Voice** In my heart, I accused Holmes of putting forward a most lame and lamentable excuse to cover his failure. What could he possibly discover from looking at an unclean watch?

**Holmes** Though unsatisfactory, my examination has not been entirely barren. I judge that the watch belonged to your elder brother who inherited it from your father.

**Watson** That you gather, no doubt, from the "H. W." on the back?

**Holmes** Yes. The "W." suggest your own name. The date of the watch is nearly fifty years back, and the initials are as old as the watch— so it was made for the generation before ours. Jewelry usually descends to the eldest son and he is more likely to have the same name as the father. I believe you once said your father has been gone many years— and so, therefore, the watch has been in the hands of your eldest brother.

**Watson** Right so far... anything else?

**Holmes** He was a man of untidy habits— very untidy and careless. He had good prospects in life but threw away his opportunities. He lived for some time in poverty, with occasional short bursts of prosperity, and finally— he began drinking too much and died. That is all I can gather.

**Watson** (*Leaping up from chair, deeply troubled*) This is unworthy of you, Holmes. I cannot believe you have descended to this. You— have undoubtedly made inquiries into the history of my unhappy brother, and now you pretend to deduce this knowledge in some fanciful way. You cannot expect me to believe that you have read all this from his old watch! It is— it is unkind, and to speak plainly, it has a touch of charlatanism in it.

**Holmes** (*Sincerely, with hand on Watson's shoulder*) My dear Doctor... pray accept my sincerest apologies... Viewing the matter as an abstract problem, I had forgotten how personal and painful a thing it might be to you... I assure you, however, that I never even knew you had a brother until you handed me the watch.

**Watson** Then how, in the name of all that is holy, did you get these facts? They are absolutely correct in every particular.

**Holmes** I could only say what was the balance of probability. I didn't expect to be so accurate.

**Watson** But it was not mere guess work?

**Holmes** Watson... I have told you... I never guess. Guessing is a shocking habit destructive to the logical faculty. Guessing implies our universe is governed by mere chance—and that is unthinkable. What is chance? It is not a thing or a person. There are far too many orderly principles at work in nature and far too many obvious evidences of design all around us for the universe to be governed by anything less than the good hand of God's providence... What appears to be fanciful guess work on my part seems that way because others do not follow my train of thought, or observe the small facts upon which large inferences depend. For example, I began by stating your brother was careless. When you observe the lower part of that watch-case, you will notice that it is not only dented in two places, but it is cut and marked all over from the habit of keeping other hard objects, such as coins or keys, in the same pocket. Surely it is no great feat to assume that a man who treats a fifty-guinea watch so cavalierly must be a careless man. Neither is it a far-fetched inference that a man who inherits one article of such value is fairly well provided for in other respects.

**Watson** Yes... yes, I see...

**Holmes** It is quite customary for English pawnbrokers, when they take a watch, to scratch the number of the ticket with a pin-point upon the inside of the case. It is more handy than a label and there is no risk of the number being lost or altered. There are no less than four such tiny numbers etched and

visible to my lens on the inside of the watch-case. Inference— that your brother was often on hard times and consequently frequented a pawn shop. Second inference— that he had occasional bursts of prosperity, or he could not have redeemed the watch. Finally, I ask you to look at the inner plate which contains the key hole grooves and scratches? But you will never see a drunkard's watch without them. He winds it at night, and he leaves these traces of his unsteady hand... Now I ask you, my friend, where is the mystery in all this?

**Watson**

Amazing!

**Holmes**

Elementary!

**Watson**

It is... as clear as daylight now. But, my dear Holmes... if you had lived a few centuries ago, you would surely have been burned at the stake! I regret the injustice which I did you.

**Holmes**

I'm afraid I mustn't tell you any more, Doctor. You know a magician gets no credit once he has explained his trick; and if I show you too much of my method, you will conclude that I am a very ordinary individual after all.

**Watson**

Oh, I shall never do that. I believe you have brought deduction to as near an exact science as it ever will be brought into this world.

*(Music begins)*

**Holmes**

*(Pausing, touched)* Why— thank you, Watson. I have spent several years training myself to see what others overlooked. My purpose now is to apply what I have learned for the sake of our fellow citizens. There is a scarlet thread of murder and mayhem running all through the colorless landscape of this Empire— and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it. It is, I believe, a high calling. In His time, God will right the wrongs...  
*(Lights on Study dim as Holmes exits and Watson walks toward Stamford)*  
*(Lights up on:)*

### SCENE 3: BAKER STREET, LONDON

**Watson**

And to that I would add, my dear Stamford, that if Sherlock Holmes has his way, God will right the wrongs sooner than later! Holmes is singularly determined to root out the evil in this empire.

**Stamford**

*(Holding up "Strand" magazine)* He appears to be making a good deal of progress.

*(Sound of violin solo Watson "Theme for Sherlock Holmes" — is heard, played with agitation)*

**Watson**

Much to the dismay of the underworld. *(Noticing violin music)* Although, I dare say that just now he is not making the kind of progress he would prefer.

**Stamford**

Is that his violin I hear?

**Watson**

Yes. I'd know it anywhere. It's fainter than usual, so he must be in the back. And we can be thankful for that. I've learned to read his moods through his music, and when it sounds like this— well—

**Stamford**

It doesn't sound encouraging, does it?

**Watson**

No. I was about to go in a few minutes ago and when I heard it, I thought better of disturbing him. He must be pondering the solution to some case.

**Stamford**

Well, I best be continuing my rounds. Do drop in at the hospital, won't you, Watson? Let's not be strangers.

**Watson**

*(Shaking his hand)* Of course. It's been good to see you, Stamford. Give my regards to your family.

**Stamford**

*(Exiting)* I will indeed. Good-bye...

**Watson's Voice**

*(As Watson picks up his bags and ponders)* It was good to see my old school chum, Stamford, and reflect upon the changes in my life since I was introduced to Sherlock Holmes one year ago. *(Approaching Baker Street Study)* But now my mind turned to Holmes himself. I was concerned for him and wondered what it was that had put him in so dark a mood. The answer came sooner than I expected...

**Mrs Hudson**

*(Shouting frantically from audience, in obvious panic and frenzy)* Oh, thank heavens! Doctor Watson! *(Running toward him)* I thought I'd never find you!

**Watson**

*(Turning to meet her in "street area")* Mrs. Hudson!

**Hudson**

*(Panting and trembling)* Oh, Doctor! I've been half mad traipsing all over London trying to find you!

**Watson**

I've been away at my army reunion. What—

**Hudson** Oh dear! I forgot all about that. Oh! I'm in such a state!

**Watson** You're trembling.

**Hudson** I've been worried sick—and not sure what to do—and thought I'd better find you—and I couldn't remember where you said you'd be—and—

**Watson** It's all right. I'm here now. What on earth is the matter, dear lady?

**Hudson** It's Mr. Holmes... He's dying!...

**Watson** What?!

**Hudson** *(Mrs. Hudson swoons and nearly faints)* Oh!

**Watson** *(Catching her)* Mrs. Hudson! *(He gently eases her on steps and "revives" her with salts)*  
*(Holmes, in dim light, staggers into Study, plays violin erratically and slumps into chair)*

**Watson's Voice** Our landlady, Mrs. Hudson, is a long-suffering woman. Not only is her first floor flat invaded at all hours by throngs of unusual characters, Holmes' malodorous chemical experiments, and the unpredictable strains of a sometimes screeching violin, she is also subjected to the irregular hours and eccentric habits of Holmes and myself. Nevertheless, she joins me in holding Holmes in the highest esteem and her caring loyalty is beyond question. This particular occasion was no exception...

**Watson** There now... are you feeling better? *(He helps her into a standing position)*

**Hudson** Yes— yes, thank you, Doctor. It's all been such a strain. I've been so worried.

**Watson** Now what's this about Holmes?

**Hudson** He's dying, Doctor Watson. It's true! For the last three days he has been sinking and I doubt if he will last the afternoon. He would not let me summon a doctor. This morning when I saw his cheeks sunk in and his great bright eyes looking at me, I could stand no more of it. I said— 'with or without your permission, Mr. Holmes, I am going for a doctor this very hour.' And he said— 'Let it be Watson, then.' I didn't waste any time.

**Watson** But how did he get this way?

**Hudson** Since you left he's been working on a case down at Rotherhithe, in an alley near the river, and I think he brought illness back here with him. Since Wednesday, he's been staggering around and mumbling kind of deliriously. Now and then he picks up that violin of his and plays in a manner I've never heard before. And yesterday he just sort of took to his chair and mostly just sits and twitches and stares and mumbles. Oh, it's so frightening! I can hardly bear to see him like this! And for three days he hasn't touched any of his food or any liquid I've tried to give him.

**Watson** Good heavens. Why didn't you bring in a doctor?

**Hudson** He wouldn't have it, sir. You know how masterful he is... how commanding.

**Watson** Yes. And stubborn.

**Hudson** Well, I didn't dare disobey him. But he's not long for this world, I'm afraid. You'll see the moment you lay eyes on him—and you'd better see him quickly...  
*(Violin music stops as Holmes carelessly sets violin aside)*

#### SCENE 4: THE STUDY OF 221 B BAKER STREET AND STREET

**Watson's Voice** We immediately ascended the steps as I braced for what I might see. *(As lights rise on Holmes' slumped figure)* Holmes was indeed a deplorable sight. In the dim light of our study, which was now a gloomy sick room, Holmes' gaunt, wasted face staring at me from his chair sent a chill to my heart. He sat listlessly as I entered, but eventually the sight of me seemed to pull him out of his fog and there was a gleam of recognition in his eyes...

**Holmes** *(Feebly, haltingly, and with effort)* Well, Watson... we seem to have fallen upon evil days...

**Watson** *(Approaching him)* My dear, dear fellow—

**Holmes** *(Suddenly, forcefully)* Stop!... Stop where you are!... Step back... Stay back. If you approach me, Watson... I shall order you out of the house.

**Watson** But why?

**Holmes** Because it is my desire... Is that not enough?

**Watson's Voice** *(As Watson takes Mrs. Hudson's hand and gently signals her to leave)* Mrs. Hudson was right. He was more masterful than ever. But it was pitiful to see the master's exhaustion... *(Hudson leaves through audience, dabbing her eyes)*

**Watson** I— I only wished to help.

**Holmes** Precisely! You will help best... by doing what you are told.

**Watson** Certainly Holmes.



**Holmes** You— you are not— angry? *(He gasps for breath)*

**Watson's Voice** My poor friend... How could I be angry when I saw him lying in such a plight before me?

**Holmes** It's for your own sake, Watson.

**Watson** For my sake? *(Watson slowly advances toward him)*

**Holmes** I know... what is... the matter with me. It is a rare disease... from Sumatra. It is a disease... that the Dutch know more about than we... though they have made little of it up to now... One thing about it... is certain... It is infallibly deadly... and it is... horribly contagious. *(Jerking and twitching, he motions Watson away)* Contagious by touch, Watson... that's it. By touch. Keep your distance... and all is well.

**Watson** Good heavens, Holmes! Do you suppose that such a consideration weighs with me for an instant? It would not affect me in the case of a stranger— do you imagine it would prevent me from doing my duty for so dear a friend?

**Holmes** *(As Watson slowly advances, with seething anger)* If you will stand back... I will talk. If you do not... you must leave the room.

**Watson's Voice** *(As Watson again retreats)* So deep is my respect for the extraordinary qualities of Holmes, I have always deferred to his wishes, even when I least understood them. But now all my professional instincts were aroused. Let him be my master elsewhere. In a sick room, I shall be his...

**Watson** *(Forcefully)* Holmes, you are not yourself. A sick man is but a child, and so I shall treat you. Whether you like it or not, I shall examine your symptoms and treat you for them.

**Holmes** *(With venom)* If I am to have a doctor whether I want one or not, let me at least have someone in whom I have confidence.

**Watson** *(Stunned)* Then... you have none in me?

**Holmes** In your friendship, certainly... But the facts are facts, Watson... And after all, you are only a general practitioner... with very limited experience... and mediocre qualifications... it is painful to have to say these things... but, you leave me no choice.

**Watson** *(Pausing; hurt)* Such a remark is beneath you, Holmes. It shows me the state of your nerves. But if you have no confidence in me I shall not intrude my services. I'll seek our Sir Jasper Meek or Doctor Penrose Fisher, or any of the best men in London. But you must have a doctor and that is final. If you think I am going to stand here and see you die without helping you myself or bringing anyone else to help you. Then you have mistaken the kind of man I am.

**Holmes** *(Amidst coughs)* You mean well, Watson... But shall I demonstrate your own ignorance? Pray, what do you know of Tapanuli fever? What do you know of Black Formosa Disease?

**Watson** I have never heard of either.

**Holmes** Indeed not... There are many problems of disease and many strange pathological possibilities from the East, Watson... This I have learned during my recent researches pertaining to a case... with medico-criminal aspects. I... have paid a high price... for my attempts to solve the case... My research... has led to my... contracting this... fatal ailment. You can do... nothing.

**Watson** Possibly not. But I happen to know that Doctor Ainstree— the greatest living authority on tropical disease is here in London. Your protests are useless, Holmes. I shall go and fetch him this instant.

**Holmes** *(Suddenly leaping from chair to block the door)* You will not! *(Dropping to knees in exhaustion and "locking" the door; gasping)* You shall remain here. *(Rebuffing Watson)* No, don't help me up. I will not put your life at risk, so take care not to touch me. *(Crawling back to chair)* Keep away from me, Watson. *(Holding up key)* I have the key, so you will remain, my friend, as long as I hold it... I know you have my own good at heart. I know that very well. You shall have your way, but give me... a little time... Just a little more time... an hour. Time to gather my strength— one hour.

**Watson** This is nonsense, Holmes.

**Holmes** Only an hour... are you... prepared to wait?

**Watson** I seem to have no choice.

**Holmes** None in the world, Watson. Now— there is one other condition. You will seek help, not from the man you mention, but from the one that I choose.

**Watson** By all means.

**Holmes** The first three sensible words you have uttered since you entered this room, Watson. You've really tried my patience today... I now know... how a battery feels when it pours electricity... into a non-conductor...

**Watson** Really, Holmes—

**Holmes** An hour. We shall resume our conversation in an hour...

**Watson's Voice** There was no point in arguing with him. I paced about nervously, waiting as each minute ticked by in what seemed like an endless succession. He appeared to be asleep. I continued to pace about restlessly and, near the end of the hour, I sauntered aimlessly to the mantelpiece and began poking about the items I found strewn about in their usual places: the various pipes and tobacco pouches, chemicals and beakers, pen-knives, revolver cartridges, books, and other debris. In the midst of all this, I spied a small ivory box with a sliding lid. It was an attractive little thing, and I stretched out my hand to examine it closely...

**Holmes** *(With a surprising shock that surprises Watson)* Stop!... Put it down! Down, this instant, Watson— this instant, I say!

*(Watson obeys and Holmes slumps back in chair with a sign of frustration)*

**Holmes** Ahhh... I hate to have my things touched, Watson, you know that I hate it. You fidget me beyond endurance... You, a doctor... you are enough to drive a patient into an asylum! Settle down, man, and let me rest a moment...

**Watson's Voice** *(As Watson stands helplessly, fidgeting with his coat lapels and looking chagrined)* His surprising outburst left me shaken. An unprovoked fit of anger for no apparent reason was not like Holmes at all— and it revealed the severity of his affliction. Of all ruins, the ruination of a noble mind is the most lamentable.

**Holmes** Shhh— it is time. I have all the strength... I hope to muster... Now, Watson— do you have any change in your pocket? *(He continues coughing)*

**Watson** Yes.

**Holmes** Any silver?

**Watson** A good deal.

**Holmes** How many crowns?

**Watson** *(Checking)* Er— I have five.

**Holmes** Ah, too few! Too few! How very fortunate, Watson. However, such as they are, you can put them in your watch pocket. *(He does so)* And all the rest in your left trouser pocket... Thank you. You'll be able to walk with a much better balance like that.

*(Watson realizes he has been taken in)*

**Watson's Voice** I remember thinking this was raving insanity...

**Watson** *(In a low voice)* This is raving insanity!...

**Watson's Voice** He shuddered and then made a sound somewhere between a cough and a sob.

**Holmes** Raise the light in the lamp, Watson— please. But not more than half.

*(He does so)*

**Holmes** Thank you. Now, please place my letters on this table in my reach.

*(He does so)*

**Holmes** Excellent, Watson. There is a sugar tongs there. Kindly use them to raise up that little ivory box.

*(He does so)*

**Holmes** Very good. Place it there on top of the letters. Hmm. I wonder how they would taste with some oysters? Well, no matter. Go, Watson. Go to fetch Mr. Culverton Smith of 13 Lower Burke Street, won't you?

**Watson's Voice** To tell the truth, my desire to fetch a doctor had weakened considerably, because poor Holmes was so obviously delirious that it seemed dangerous to leave him. However, he was as eager now to consult the person he named as he had been obstinate in refusing anyone else.

**Watson** Mr. Culverton Smith?

**Holmes** At 13 Lower Burke Street. *(Holmes continues to speak haltingly and coughs occasionally)*

**Watson** I've never heard the name.

**Holmes** Possibly not, my good Watson. It may surprise you to know that the man upon earth who is best versed in this disease is not a medical man, but a planter and a mathematician. An odd combination, I'll admit, but one that uniquely qualifies him in his particular research. Mr. Culverton Smith, I believe, once had an outbreak of this disease on his plantation, which led to his researching it himself. He is an unusually young prodigy— a genius in his field. He is also very methodical and, because of his habits, I knew you would not find him in his study before this hour. Please— if you would, persuade him to come here and give us the benefit of his unique knowledge of this disease. I am positive that he can help me if only he is willing. *(Holmes has a coughing spell)*

**Watson's Voice** He was sinking fast, but he still managed a commanding presence and gallantry of speech. To the last gasp, he would always be the master.

**Holmes** Now be sure to tell him... the state I am in. Convey... the impression that is surely in your own mind—a dying man.... A dying and delirious man. Indeed, I cannot think why the ocean is not one solid mass of oysters. Ahh! I am wandering! Strange, strange... how the brain controls the brain. What was I saying Watson?

**Watson** My instructions for Mr. Culverton Smith.

**Holmes** Ah, yes, I remember. My life depends upon it. Plead with him, Watson. There is, I fear, ill will between the two of us. His brother, Watson—I had suspicions of foul play and I allowed him to know it. His brother died horribly. He has a grudge against me. Soften him, Watson. Beg him. Get him here by any means. He can save me. Only he!

*(Music begins)*

**Watson** I'll bring him here if I have to pick him up and carry him.

**Holmes** You will do nothing of the sort. You will persuade him to come. And then you will return here before he arrives. I have the disposition of my small estate to discuss with you, should Smith prove ineffective.

**Watson** I'm sure it won't be necessary to speak of such things.

**Holmes** Nevertheless, come back before he gets here. Make any excuse so as not to come with him. Don't forget, Watson. You won't fail me. You never have failed me. No doubt the oysters have natural enemies that keep down their population. You and I, Watson, have done our part. *(Tossing key to floor near Watson)* But, shall the world be overrun by oysters? Ahhh—it is too much to bear! Go Watson—convey to Smith all that is in your mind. All that you have seen... The oysters, Watson! Beware the oysters!...

*(Watson slowly walks out of Study; Holmes sits listlessly in shadow)*

**Watson's Voice** I left this magnificent intellect in his delirium as he continued babbling like a foolish child. I was only too glad to take the key with me so he wouldn't lock himself in. The news of Holmes' illness was already traveling fast, as I discovered upon finding Scotland Yard's Inspector Lestrade in the vicinity...

**Watson** *(Descending Study steps)* Inspector...

**Lestrade** *(Having emerged from audience)* How is Mr. Holmes, Doctor?

**Watson** He is ill. Gravely ill.

**Lestrade** I saw his Mrs. Hudson and heard of it. I'm very sorry.

**Watson** Pray, won't you?

*(Lestrade nods, paces briefly in a circle, and exits through audience)*

**Watson's Voice** *(As Watson walks through audience)* I had no good nor rightful reason to think such a thing, but I was annoyed to suddenly find that Lestrade reminded me of a circling vulture. I dismissed the thought with the urgency of my mission and briskly proceeded to Lower Burke Street. It was indeed a blessing that it was only a stone's throw from our own Baker Street. I stopped at number thirteen and found the butler evidently returning from some errand...

*(Lighting shifts to:)*

## SCENE 5: THE STUDY OF CULVERTON SMITH

*(Music fades)*

**Watson** Pardon me— *(Hands Staples his card)* — is Mr. Culverton Smith at home?

**Staples** Yes, Mr. Smith is in— er— *(Looking at card)* — Dr. Watson. Very good, sir. I shall present your card. *(He ascends steps and presents card to Smith, who is seated)*

**Watson's Voice** *(As Watson paces impatiently)* My humble name and title did not appear to impress Mr. Culverton Smith.

**Smith** *(Tossing card to the floor and poking up experimental beakers of chemicals)* Who is this person?! What does he want? Dear me, Staples, how often have I said that I am not to be disturbed in my hours of study?

**Staples** *(Picking up card)* But, sir... *(Whispers into Smith's ear)*

**Smith** Well, I won't see him, Staples! I can't have my work interrupted like this. I am not at home... *(Staples whispers in his ear)* Say that I am not at home! *(Staples whispers again)*

**Smith** Confound it, I don't care whether he can hear me or not! Tell him to come in the morning or he can stay away My work must not be interrupted!...

**Watson's Voice** *(As Staples slinks sheepishly to Watson)* The minutes ticked by and I only thought of Holmes.

**Staples** I'm sorry, Sir. But Mr. Smith regrettably is unable—

**Watson** *(Pushing Staples aside)* Rubbish! *(Walks to Smith)* Now see here, Smith. I have come on a matter of urgency and you're going to listen to what I have to say.

**Smith** What's this?! *(To Staples)* Get out!  
*(Staples cowers away)*

**Smith** *(Standing, to Watson)* What is the meaning of this rude intrusion? Didn't I send word that I would see you tomorrow morning?

**Watson** I'm sorry, but the matter cannot wait. Mr. Sherlock Holmes is—

**Smith** *(Alert, tense)* Have you come from Holmes?

**Watson** I have just left him.

**Smith** What about Holmes? How is he?

**Watson** He is desperately ill. That is why I have come.

**Smith** Do sit down.

**Watson** There's no time for that.

**Smith** *(Sitting down, craftily eyeing beaker in his hand and alternately peering at Watson)* I am sorry to hear this about Mr. Holmes. I only know him through some business dealings we have had. But I have every respect for his talents and his character. He is to crime what I am to disease. For him the villain, for me, the microbe. *(Motioning to table of bottles and jars)* There are my prisons. Among these gelatin cultivations some of the very worst offenders in the world are now doing time.

**Watson** It is on account of your special knowledge that Mr. Holmes desired to see you. He has a high opinion of you and thought that you were the one man in London who could help him.

**Smith** Oh?... Why?... Why should Mr. Holmes think that I could help him in his trouble?

**Watson** Because of your knowledge of Eastern diseases.

**Smith** But why should he think that this disease he has contracted is Eastern?

**Watson** Because, in some professional inquiry, he has been working at the river docks— where the Chinese sailors often stop.

**Smith** Oh. That's it, is it? I see... I trust the matter is not as grave as you suppose. How long has he been ill?

**Watson** About three days.

**Smith** Is he delirious?

**Watson** Occasionally.

**Smith** Oh... This does sound serious. *(Rising)* It would be inhuman not to answer his call. I very much resent any interruption to my work, Dr. Watson, but this case is certainly exceptional. I will come with you at once.

**Watson's Voice** I remembered Holmes' request about my returning early.

**Watson** I— er— just now, I have another appointment.

**Smith** Very well, then. I shall go alone. I believe I have a note of Mr. Holmes' address. You may rely upon my being there within a few minute.

**Watson** Thank you, sir. *(He extends hand to Smith, who resumes absorption in his staring at his beakers and does not notice. Watson walks toward Baker Street Study)*

*(Music begins)*

*(Lighting shift to)*

## SCENE 6: THE STUDY OF 221 B BAKER STREET AND STREET

**Watson** It was with a sinking heart that I returned to Holmes. For all that I knew, the worst may have happened in my absence. *(As Watson enters Study)* To my enormous relief, he appeared to have improved. His appearance was still ghastly, but his delirium seemed to have left him, at least for the moment. He was still weak and spoke feebly, it is true, but more of his former self was evident...

*(Music fades)*

**Holmes** Well... Did you see him, Watson?

**Watson** Yes. He is coming.

**Holmes** Admirable, Watson! Admirable! You are the best of messengers.

**Watson** He wanted to return with me.

**Holmes** That would never do, Watson— never do at all. Did he ask what afflicted me?

**Watson** I told him about your inquiries among the Chinese sailors in the East end.

**Holmes** Precisely! Well, Watson, you have done all that a good friend could.

You may now disappear from the scene.

**Watson** But Holmes— I should like to stay and hear his opinion.

**Holmes** Of course, my friend. But I have reason to suppose that his opinion will be very much more frank and valuable if he supposes we are alone. There is just room behind my chair for you to crouch, Watson.

**Watson** My dear Holmes—

**Holmes** Time is of the essence and I fear there is no alternative, Watson. Our study does not lend itself to concealment, which is just as well, as it is the less likely to arouse suspicion. *(Pointing)* But just there, Watson, I fancy it could be done. Quick man!

*(Music begins)*

**Watson** But Holmes— *(He "hides")*

**Holmes** Quickly! Don't speak! Don't move! Whatever happens— whatever happens— just listen with all your ears. Ohhh! Oh my! I feel them— the oysters! Oh, no... *(As Holmes mumbles about oysters, the ocean, crowns and half-crowns, Smith approaches and eventually knocks on Study door)*

**Watson's Voice** From the hiding place to which I had been so swiftly dispatched, I heard the foot-falls upon our steps, a tapping at our door and a little else except the murmurs of my friend and his labored gasps for breath...

**Smith** *(After entering and staring at the listless Holmes)* Holmes... Holmes... Can you hear me, Holmes?

**Holmes** Is that you... Mr. Smith?... I hardly dared hope that you would come.

**Smith** *(With a slight laugh)* I should imagine not. And yet, you see, I am here. Forgive and forget, Holmes— forgive and forget!

**Holmes** It is very good of you— very noble of you. I appreciate your special knowledge.

**Smith** You do... You are, fortunately one of only two men in London who does... the other being a certain patron of mine— a certain professor...

*(Music fades)*

**Smith** Do you know what is the matter with you?

**Holmes** The same. The same as—

**Smith** Ah! You recognize the symptoms?

**Holmes** Only too well.



**Smith** Well, I shouldn't be surprised, Holmes. I shouldn't be surprised if it were the same. A bad turn of events for you, if it is. Poor Victor was a dead man on the fourth day... a strong, tall young man like myself. It was certainly, as you said, very surprising that he should have contracted such an out-of-the-way Eastern disease in the heart of London... a disease of which I had made such a very special study. A singular coincidence, Holmes. Very smart of you to notice it, but rather uncharitable to suggest it was cause and effect. That I would do such a thing... to my own brother... well... dear me.

**Holmes** I knew that you did it.

**Smith** Oh, you did, did you? Well, you couldn't prove it anyhow. But what do you think of yourself spreading reports about me like that— and then crawling to me for help the moment are in trouble? What sort of a game is that, hmmm?

**Holmes** (*Groaning*) Yes... but do what you can for me, please. Let bygones be bygones. I'll put the words out of my head, I promise you. Only cure me and I shall forget it.

**Smith** Forget what?

**Holmes** Your brother, Victor's death... You as much as admitted just now that you had done it... I'll forget it.

**Smith** You can forget it or you can remember it, just as you like. I don't think I'll see you in the witness box. No, I think I shall see you in another kind of box, Holmes, I assure you. It matters nothing to me that you should know how my brother died. It's not him we are talking about. It's you.

**Holmes** (*Listless*) Yes... yes...

**Smith** The fellow who came for me— Wattle, Watson, whatever— said you contracted it down in the East end among the sailors.

**Holmes** I could only... account for it... there.

**Smith** You are proud of your intellect, Holmes, are you not? Think yourself smart, don't you? You came across someone who is smarter this time. Now cast your mind back, Holmes. Can you think of no other way you could have got this thing?

**Holmes** I can't think... My mind is gone... please— just help me!

**Smith** Yes, I will help you. I'll help you understand just where you are and how you got there. I'd like you to know— before you die.

**Holmes** Please! Give me something for the pain—

**Smith** Painful is it? Yes, I recall some of the sailors used to do some screaming toward the end. Cramps, I imagine.

**Holmes** Yes, yes! Cramps...

**Smith** Well, you can hear what I say, anyhow. Listen now... Can you remember any unusual incident in your life just about the time your symptoms began?

**Holmes** No... no nothing...

**Smith** Think again.

**Holmes** I'm too ill to think.

**Smith** Well, then I'll help you. Did anything come by post?

**Holmes** By post? The mails?

**Smith** A little box by chance?

**Holmes** (*Fading*) I— I—

**Smith** (*Shaking Holmes*) Listen Holmes! You must hear me! You will hear me! Do you remember a box— an ivory box? It came on Wednesday. You opened it— do you remember?

**Holmes** Yes, yes— I opened it. There was a sharp spring inside it. Some joke—

**Smith** Oh, it was no joke, as you'll discover to your own demise... You fool! ... Who asked you to cross my path and interfere with my plans?

**Holmes** (*Gasping*) I remember... The spring in the box! It drew blood... (*Pointing*) This box— this on the table.

**Smith** The very one, by Jupiter! (*Carefully picking it up and pocketing it*) And it may as well leave the room in my pocket. There goes your last shred of evidence... But you have the truth now, Holmes, and you can die with the knowledge that I killed you. You knew too much about the fate of my meddlesome brother, Victor Smith. And soon you will share his fate.

**Holmes** But— why? Why did you— kill him?

**Smith** Why? Because he discovered I was in league with the Professor. He threatened to talk.

**Holmes** You could only mean— Professor... Moriarty...

**Smith** The same. The Professor was astute enough to notice my rising star in the field of pathology and he admired my research so much he began funding it— discreetly of course. All I have to do is supply him with one of these boxes now and then to send to certain government officials who threaten to inconvenience him. It's a lucrative arrangement. I dare say he'll pay handsomely for completion of this job, Mr. Holmes. You must know how you frustrate him. His control of the underworld is nearly absolute and with you out of the way—

**Holmes** (*Faintly*) You'll never... get away... with—

**Smith** Oh, but I will! You're almost through now, Holmes. I will stay here and I will watch you die...

**Holmes** (*Beckons weakly*) Smith...

*(Smith bends to him as Holmes whispers)*

**Smith** What's that? Turn up the lantern? More light? Ah! The shadows begin to fall, do they? Yes I will turn it up... (*He does so*)

*(Lights rise)*

**Smith** Now I'll be able to see you and your end all the better! Is there any other little service that I may perform for you, my friend?...

**Holmes** (*Rising suddenly, completely normal*) Yes— my pipe and my matches, please!

**Smith** (*Momentarily frozen, stunned; after a pause*) Wh— what's the meaning of this?!

**Holmes** The best way of successfully acting a part is to be the part, wouldn't you agree? I give you my word that I have scarcely touched neither food nor drink for three days until you were good enough to pour me out that glass of water. But I think I've missed my pipe the most. (*Lights pipe*)

**Smith** But— but, you're well.

**Holmes** Perfectly. (*As Lestrade and constable ascend Study steps from audience*) Ahh! Do I hear the footsteps of a friend? (*As Lestrade and constable enter*) Indeed I do! Inspector Lestrade, all is in order and this is your man.

**Lestrade** (*To Smith*) I arrest you on the charge of the murder of one Victor Smith.

**Holmes** And you might add the attempted murder of one Sherlock Holmes. Not to mention conspiracy in the murder of others. (*Chuckling*) To save an invalid trouble, Inspector, Mr. Culverton Smith was good enough to give our signal by turning up the lamp! Oh, by the way, the prisoner has a small box in the right-hand pocket of his coat which you would be wise to remove. (*Lestrade does so*) Careful now— thank you. I would handle it gingerly if I were you. (*Motions*) Place it there. I should think it will play its part in the trial, as I have played mine.

**Lestrade** (*Snapping handcuffs on Smith, who resists*) And for you, a matching pair of bracelets. Hold still now... There... (*To Holmes*) A rather effective gambit, Mr. Holmes... albeit highly unconventional and thoroughly theatrical, I must say...

**Smith** A bogus trap! It will bring you to the gallows, Holmes. Not me. False arrest! An attempt to frame me for murder! A desperate and malicious stunt for publicity!

**Holmes** Oh, dear me...

**Smith** (*To Lestrade, with urgency*) He asked me to come here to cure him. I was sorry for him and I came. Now he will pretend, no doubt, that I have said anything which he may invent which will corroborate his insane suspicions. Well, you can lie as you like, Holmes. My word is always as good as yours!

**Holmes** (*Assuming feigned realization*) Good heavens! I have totally forgotten my friend and associate. Oh— Watson. Will you kindly join us?...

(*Watson emerges and joins others*)

**Smith** (*Shocked, to Watson*) You!

**Holmes** My dear Watson, I owe you a thousand apologies. To think I should have overlooked you! I need not introduce you to Mr. Culverton Smith, since I understand that you met somewhat earlier in the evening. (*Picking up an apple*) Ahh! I can use a bite just now. (*Eats apple*)

**Watson** You amaze me. Holmes.

**Holmes** I hope you haven't been offended, Watson. It was essential that I should impress Mrs. Hudson with my condition since she was to convey it to you, and you, in turn, to him. Among your many talents, Watson, good acting finds no place. If I had shared my secret, you never have been able to impress Smith with the urgent necessity of his presence, which was the vital point of my scheme. Knowing of his vindictive nature, I was perfectly certain that he would come to look upon— (*Motions to his own face and appearance*) — his destructive handiwork.

**Watson** But, your appearance, Holmes— your face...

**Holmes** (*While wiping off make-up and returning to a normal appearance*) Well, fasting does not improve one's appearance, Watson. For the rest, there is nothing which a sponge may not cure. With Vaseline upon one's forehead, belladonna in one's eyes, rouge over the cheekbones, and crusts of beeswax 'round one's lips— all in a low light— a most satisfactory effect can be produced. I may write a monograph upon the subject... And a little talk of half-crowns and oysters and the like produces a pleasing effect of delirium.

**Watson** But why would you not let me near you, since there was, in truth, no infection?

**Holmes** (*Placing hand on Watson's shoulder*) Must you ask, my dear Watson? Do you really imagine that I have no respect for your medical talents? Could I possibly hope your absolute judgment would overlook that a supposedly dying man had no rise of pulse or temperature? At two yards, I could deceive you. If I failed to do so, who would have brought Smith within my grasp? (*Noticing Constable picking up box*) I'd be careful with that box, Constable. You can just see if you look at it sideways where the sharp spring like a viper's tooth emerges as you open it. I dare say it was by this insidious device that poor Victor Smith was done to death. Who knows how many others have been spared a similar fate...

**Smith** You'll be sorry you interfered, Holmes.

**Holmes** Oh, I doubt that. You, on the other hand, may have cause for regret when you find I am able to appear in that witness box after all.

**Smith** We shall see.

**Holmes** Indeed you shall. It only remains to say, gentlemen, that my correspondence is a varied assortment and I am somewhat upon my guard against any packages which reach me. It was clear to me, however, that by pretending that he had really succeeded in his design, I might surprise a confession. Of course, as we have all seen, my plan has been successful. (*He re-lights his pipe*)

**Lestrade** I must admit, Mr. Holmes, that you have excelled in this matter. And, I must say, Scotland Yard is grateful... despite your— unusual methods.

**Holmes** Think nothing of it, Inspector Lestrade. Justice is its own reward. God and our fellow citizens have been served. I wonder, Watson, if you would accompany the Inspector to headquarters and make a statement of the facts corroborating what has transpired here.

(*Music begins*)

**Watson** (*Eyeing Smith*) I shall only be too happy to do so...

**Smith** (*As Lestrade and constable begin escorting him out; to Holmes*) You may have beaten me, but the game isn't over yet.

**Holmes** Of that I have no doubt.

**Smith** Mark my words— you'll be sorry. You'll pay dearly for this! Someone we both know will have more to say about it, I assure you. Put that in your pipe and smoke it, Mr. Busybody Holmes!...

**Lestrade** *(To Smith)* Here now— who are you referring to? Speak up! Does someone else pose a threat to Mr. Holmes? *(Smith merely smirks at Lestrade)*... No further comment, eh? So much the worse for you!

**Holmes** Mr. Smith is undoubtedly referring to one Professor Moriarty.

**Smith** *(Menacingly)* It is not a name to be taken in vain. I suggest you keep it off your lips!

**Watson** Moriarty?

**Lestrade** The devil himself. A criminal mastermind. He's famous among crooks as— as—

**Holmes** *(With false modesty)* Now, now, Lestrade...

**Lestrade** *(Tweaking Holmes)* I was about to say— as he is unknown to the public.

**Holmes** A distinctly cheeky touch, Inspector.

**Watson** I've only heard you gentlemen speak of him. I have no idea who he is.

**Holmes** And there's the genius and the wonder of the thing! The man pervades London and no one has heard of him! That's what puts him on a pinnacle in the records of crime. When at last I am able to free society of that man, I should feel as if my own career had reached its summit and I shall not rest until that day. And the day is soon coming.

**Watson** He sounds dangerous.

**Holmes** Extremely. He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. Moriarty is the organizer of half that is evil and nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He sits like a spider in the center of his web— but that web has a thousand strands and he knows every quiver of each of them. Smith is tied to him like so many others of his... ilk. *(Holmes returns to his chair, dispenses with pipe and eats apple)*

**Lestrade** Then it's time the wheels of justice started turning, eh Smith? Let's go, you!...  
*(As the Constable, Lestrade, and Watson escort Smith down Study steps, various Londoners emerge as passersby. Among them is the shadowy, discreet figure of Moriarty, who slowly approaches the Study steps)*

**Watson** Inspector, how is it that a man as notorious as Professor Moriarty is so free to spin his spider webs undetected?

**Lestrade** I'm afraid we have only sketchy and contradictory descriptions of him, Doctor. Why he could be virtually anyone in the street. *(Accidentally bumping into Moriarty)* Pardon me...  
*(As Watson, Lestrade, Constable, and Smith exit through audience, Moriarty leers at them with a visage of malignant disdain; he creeps up Study steps and uses his cane to push the door open)*

**Holmes** *(Casually)* Come in, won't you? I've been expecting you. *(Places hand in pocket)*

**Moriarty** *(Entering slowly)* Greetings, Mr. Holmes. At long last... *(They survey one another)*

**Holmes** It has been inevitable... Professor.

**Moriarty** So it has.  
*(Music fades)*

**Holmes** Now that Smith is in custody and I am closing in on the others, I should think you'd want to discuss matters.

**Moriarty** You are indeed astute. You have therefore theorized that I have been connected to Smith.

**Holmes** It is not a theory, it is a fact. Observed you together.

**Moriarty** Impossible.

**Holmes** I followed you.

**Moriarty** I saw no one.

**Holmes** That is what you may expect to see when I follow you.

**Moriarty** It is a dangerous habit to follow me. Almost as dangerous as fingering a loaded firearm in the pocket of one's dressing gown.  
*(Holmes draws out weapon, cocks pistol, and lays it on table next to him)*

**Moriarty** Come now, there's no need for that. You evidently don't know me.

**Holmes** On the contrary, I think it fairly evident that I do. Now, I can spare you a moment or two if you have anything to say.

**Moriarty** All that I have to say has already crossed your mind.

**Holmes** Then possibly my answer has crossed yours.

**Moriarty** You will not join me?

**Holmes** No.

**Moriarty** You will not withdraw?

**Holmes** No.

**Moriarty** You stand fast?

**Holmes** Absolutely.  
*(Moriarty reaches into his pocket and Holmes reaches for his gun, relaxing when Moriarty merely pulls out a notebook)*

**Moriarty** *(Consulting notebook)* You thwarted one of my plans on the fourth of last October. On the twenty-third you managed to irritate me. By the middle of November I was seriously inconvenienced by you. At the end of December I was absolutely hampered in my plans and here in *(January/February, etc— the current month)*, I find myself placed in such a position through your continual persecution that I am in positive danger of losing my liberty.

**Holmes** That has indeed been the objective of my considerable efforts.

**Moriarty** The situation is becoming an impossible one.

**Holmes** Do you have any suggestions?

**Moriarty** *(Seething)* You must drop it, Mr. Holmes... you really must, you know.

**Holmes** It will be over soon, I assure you.

**Moriarty** Tut, tut! I am certain that a man of your intelligence will see that there can be but one outcome to this matter. You must withdraw. You have worked things in such a fashion that we have only one recourse left. Oh, to be sure, it has been an intellectual treat for me to see the way in which you have grappled with these matters. And I say, it would indeed be a pity to be forced to take any extreme measure. You smile, sir, but I assure you that it really would.

**Holmes** Danger is part of my trade.

**Moriarty** Oh, this is not danger. It is inevitable destruction. You stand in the way not merely of an individual, but of a mighty organization— the full extent of which you, with all your cleverness, have been unable to realize. You must stand clear, Mr. Holmes, or be dashed under foot.

**Holmes** I'm afraid that in the pleasure of this conversation I am neglecting business of importance elsewhere.

*(Music begins— subtle and understated)*

**Moriarty** I see... well... It seems a pity, but I have done what I could. I know every move of your game. It has been a duel between you and me, Mr. Holmes. You hope to place me on the gallows. I tell you that I will never stand on the gallows. You hope to beat me. I tell you that you will never beat me. If you are clever enough to bring destruction upon me, rest assured that I shall do as much to you.

**Holmes** You have paid me several compliments, Professor Moriarty. Let me pay you one in return when I say that if I were assured of your destruction I would, in the interests of the public, cheerfully accept my own.

**Moriarty** *(Snarling)* I can promise you the one, but not the other! *(He exits through Study door, jostling Watson, who is returning)* Out of my way! *(He leaves through audience)*

**Watson** Good heavens, Holmes. Who was that impolite fellow?

**Holmes** *(Portentously)* It was him.

**Watson** *(With sudden realization)* You don't mean—



**Holmes** Moriarty.

**Watson** But, Holmes—

**Holmes** (*Locking door*) It went badly. And now we'll undoubtedly be watched by his henchmen. We shouldn't linger here through the night, but I dare say that remaining a short time is still wiser than walking the street just now. Let us bide some time. And let us keep away from the windows.

**Watson** You're afraid of something?

**Holmes** Air guns. The weapon of choice for Moriarty and his band of evil. (*Pulls open shirt to reveal bandage on upper shoulder*) I received this trifling little gift from his organization in the street just after you left for your army reunion. Merely a flesh wound. (*He re-buttons shirt*)

**Watson** That could have been serious.

**Holmes** It was all I needed to know that the blows I have struck against this infamous empire are having their effect. Moriarty and I go back some time, and the fact that I am so close to exposing and crushing his operations is more than he can bear. I say, Watson— (*Hands him paper*) — here's a somewhat relevant piece of paper that would be worth your while to glance over. The message on that sheet you hold once struck a man dead with horror when he read it.

**Watson** (*Reading*) But— this is— this is nothing but— gibberish.

**Holmes** (*With a chuckle*) Yes, you seem a tad bewildered. Here— (*Turning over a revolving chalkboard*) — I've written the message out. Can you not make anything of it?

**Watson** (*Reading message out loud*) "Your cow is past hope and is not well known to the doctor. The cow has now been demanded to forget all prospects for payment of apples due here, there, or perhaps anywhere else. And so we will probably go blind running to pick up newspapers." (*Chuckles*) Holmes, I can hardly see how such a silly message could inspire terror.

**Holmes** And yet— the person who read it was struck down by it as if it had been a sledge hammer.

**Watson** You have certainly aroused my curiosity. But why have you brought it to my attention just now?

**Holmes** Because it was my very first case.

**Watson** Oh?

**Holmes** And my first encounter with Moriarty.

**Watson** I see.

**Holmes** And it involved our mutual friend— Stamford. The man who introduced you to me.

**Watson** Stamford? He spoke of a time when you were of help to his family.

**Holmes** A long time ago. And not as much help as I would like to have been. You see, Watson, I am sorry to say that it was Stamford's own father who was struck dead from this message.

**Watson** Good heavens...

*(Music rises)*

**Holmes** A few years ago, as I was in search of a place to conduct my chemical experiments, I met up with Stamford at Saint Bartholomew's Hospital. He's a friendly chap, you know, and didn't seem to mind my— er— particular habits. I've never been a sociable fellow, but he took a friendly interest in my welfare and finally invited me to spend a few days at his father's estate in Norfolk...

*(Watson "freezes" in dim light as emphasis shifts to:)*

#### SCENE 7: THE STAMFORD ESTATE, NORFOLK (Drawing Room)

*(Holmes walks into scene and is greeted by Stamford. Stamford is joined by Judge Stamford and, during Holmes narrative, the men converse in animated pantomime)*

**Stamford** (*Greeting Holmes*) Ahhh, Holmes! I'm so glad you could join us for a little holiday. You're much too engrossed in your work and this will be just the ticket. Allow me to introduce you to my father. I think you'll both hit it off splendidly!

**Judge** (*Shaking Holmes' hand*) Welcome to our estate, young man! Junior has told me so much about you...

*(They are seated and "talk" as servants bring them refreshments)*

**Holmes' Voice** The elder Stamford was a fascinating gentleman and I soon learned he had been appointed a Justice of the Peace some years earlier. We talked amiably at great length and I learned that Judge Stamford was a widower, and our mutual friend his only son. He was a man of wealth and influence, well-traveled, well-liked, and well-known for his charity and the lenient sentences issued from his bench...

**Stamford** You'll recall, Father, that Holmes is the fellow who has a sort of system for observation. He makes amazing inferences from the things he sees around him.

**Judge** *(Laughing)* Oh, yes. I remember now. Sounds interesting. Well, Mr. Holmes, how about giving me the "once over?" I think I'm an excellent subject. *(Winking at Stamford)* Let's see if you can deduce anything about me! *(Roaring with laughter)* This should be good, eh, Junior?! Ha, ha, ha, ha!...

*(Music fades)*

**Holmes** I fear there is not very much to be learned.

**Judge** *(Laughing)* I thought not! Ha, ha, ha!...

**Holmes** Although... I might suggest you have gone about in fear of some personal attack in the last year.

**Judge** *(Suddenly sobered)* Er— well, yes— er— that's true enough. *(Turns to Stamford)* You know, when I broke up that counterfeiting ring, some of the gang swore to knife me. I've always been on my guard since then, though I have no idea how you know it.

**Holmes** You have a handsome walking stick, Judge Stamford. *(Picking it up)* I couldn't help notice by the inscribed year that it was purchased within the last twelve months. But you have taken some pains to bore into the head of the stick and pour molten lead into the hole so as to make it a formidable weapon. I immediately concluded you would not take such precautions unless you had some danger to fear. *(The following is recited rapidly)*

**Judge** *(Laughing)* Fascinating! Haha! *(Pausing, now worried)* Er— anything else?

**Holmes** You have done a good deal of boxing in your time.

**Judge** Right again. *(Examines fists)* But how did you know?

**Holmes** Your ears. They have the peculiar flattening and thickening which marks a boxer.

**Judge** I see. *(Now somewhat irritated, though smiling)* Er— anything else?

**Holmes** The type and location of your calluses indicate you have held a shovel and done a great deal of digging.

**Judge** Made all my money in the gold fields.

**Holmes** The way you knot your shoes point to your having been a sailor.

**Judge** *(Sobered)* Yes, indeed.

**Holmes** The lilt in your speech tells me you spent some time in Australia.

**Judge** Right again.

**Holmes** And you have been most intimately associated with someone whose initials were J.A., and whom you are now eager to entirely forget... *(Judge and Stamford stare, dumbfounded)* Other than these few trivialities... I can hardly discern anything.

**Judge** *(Rising)* Why— I— you— *(He collapses; Holmes and Stamford revive him with water and help him back up)*

**Holmes' Voice** You can imagine, Watson, how shocked both his son and I were. His attack did not last long, however, and he sputtered back to life.

**Judge** *(Reviving)* Ah, boys— er— forgive me... I hope I haven't frightened you. Strong as I may look, I've been told I have a weak heart and it doesn't take much to knock me over, I'm afraid. I don't know how you do it, Holmes, but I do believe all the detectives of fact and fiction would be children in your hands! That's the line of work for your life, sir, and you can take the word of a man who has seen something of the world!... *(Holmes offers Judge more water to drink)*

**Holmes' Voice** And that recommendation— if you will believe me, Watson— was the first time I had any inkling I could make a profession out of what had, up to that time, been merely my hobby. At the moment, however, I was more concerned for the welfare of my host...

**Holmes** I hope I have said nothing to pain you.

**Judge** Well, you certainly touched upon a rather tender point. Might I ask how you know— and, er— how much you know?

**Holmes** Well, it is simplicity itself. When you rolled up your shirt sleeves earlier this evening, I saw that J.A. had been tattooed on your forearm. The letters are still legible, but it's perfectly clear from their blurred appearance, and from the staining of the skin around them, that efforts have been made to obliterate them.

**Judge** What a remarkable eye you have, young man. It is just as you say. But we shall not speak of it. Of all the ghosts from the past, the ghosts of our old loves may be the worst! Pardon me... *(He sloshes more water down, then uses a handkerchief to mop his face)*

**Stamford** *(Pulling Holmes aside)* You've given my father a shock, I must say. *(Chuckling)* He'll never again be sure of what you know and what you don't know.

**Holmes' Voice** *(As the three resume "conversing")* Stamford's prediction proved accurate as I began to sense I now made the old judge uneasy. And then a strange visitor came...

**Maid** *(Entering)* Excuse me, Judge Stamford. There is a man at the back door who says he wants to see you.

**Judge** What is his name?

**Maid** He would not give his name, sir.

**Judge** What does he want then?

**Maid** He says that you know him and that he only wants a moment's conversation.

**Judge** Well, show him in, then.  
*(Maid exits)*

**Judge** *(Snidely, to Holmes)* And we were having such a good time... *(As Moran enters)* Well, my good man— what may I do for you?

**Moran** *(Dressed poorly)* You don't know me?... Look carefully now...

**Judge** *(With sudden surprise of recognition)* Moran?! Why, dear me, it is surely Colonel Moran!

**Moran** Moran it is, sir. Why, it's been many years since I last laid eyes on you! My, my! Here you are in your nice, fancy house— and me still running about in my shabby old suits. Oh— I hope I haven't interrupted—

**Judge** Nonsense, nonsense! You'll find I haven't forgotten old times.

**Moran** *(Ominously)* Neither have I...

**Judge** Well, now, let's go out into the kitchen and I'll get you something to eat. Yes, I'm sure we can work out some sort of arrangement...

**Moran** Oh, thank you, sir. I knew I could count on me old, old friend!...

*(Music begins)*

*(Stamford gives Holmes a bewildered look, shrugs shoulders, shakes Holmes' hand, and exits)  
(Lighting is dim, but not out, on "Estate" and brightens on Study as Holmes rejoins Watson)*

## SCENE 8: THE STUDY OF 221 B BAKER ST./ STAMFORD ESTATE

**Holmes** And so, Watson, seeing as how Judge Stamford no longer knew how to regard me— and in light of this strange, unexpected visitor, I decided to end my holiday. I was only too eager to return to my chemical experiments.  
*(As Holmes speaks, Judge Stamford appears in "estate" area, is handed a letter, reads letter, and collapses. Stamford appears and attempts to help)*

**Holmes** But I had no sooner returned to London when I received an urgent telegram from our mutual friend, Stamford, imploring me to return to the Stamford family estate. He wrote that he was in great need of my advice and assistance. Naturally, I dropped everything and immediately journeyed north back to Norfolk...  
*(Holmes returns to:)  
(Lighting shifts to:)*

## SCENE 9: THE STAMFORD ESTATE, NORFOLK (Drawing Room)

**Stamford** *(A doctor appears and attends to Judge Stamford as maid looks on)  
(Greeting Holmes, shaking his hand)* Holmes! Thank heavens you're here! I have shocking news — my father appears to be dying.

**Holmes** I'm dreadfully sorry to hear it. But what's the matter?

**Stamford** Nervous shock— that was my diagnosis and our doctor confirms it.

**Holmes** Any idea what caused it?

**Stamford** Do you remember that strange man who surprised us with a visit before you left?

**Holmes** Perfectly.

**Stamford** Do you know who it was who came into the house that day?

**Holmes** I have no idea.

**Stamford** It was the devil, Holmes! The devil himself! We have not had a peaceful hour since— not one. My father has never been the same since. He made that Colonel Moran the chief steward and administrator of our estate and all of us have been at his mercy ever since.

**Holmes** Strange.

**Stamford** He ate and drank what he liked and ordered everybody about. The servants complained so much about his drinking and vile language that my father raised all their wages just to keep them on. The fellow took my father’s boat and his best gun and went on hunting trips whenever he liked. And all this with such a sneering, leering, insolent face that I would have knocked him down twenty times over if he had been a man of my own age.

**Holmes** I can’t say that I blame you. What was his power over your father?

**Stamford** Ah! I would give almost anything to know that. But things only went from bad to worse. This wretched Colonel Moran became more and more intrusive, until at last— when he made some rude reply to my father— I could stand no more of it. I grabbed him by the shoulders and threw him out the door. My father begged me to find Moran and apologize. I love my father— but I wouldn’t hear of it. He said he couldn’t blame me, but he’s been in a state of nervous agitation ever since. And then, yesterday, he received this letter— and collapsed.  
*(Hands letter to Holmes)*

**Holmes** *(Reading)* “Your cow is past hope and is not well known to the doctor. The cow has now been demanded to forget all prospects for payment of apples due here, there, or perhaps anywhere else. And so we will probably go blind running to pick up newspapers.” What can be in this letter that would cause so dreadful a result?

**Stamford** That’s the mystery of it. The message is absurd and trivial.  
*(Doctor approaches and puts hand on Stamford’s shoulder)*

**Stamford** Oh, no. *(Stamford kneels by Judge)* Father...

**Judge** *(Gasping, he raises his hand and places is on Stamford’s shoulder)* I’m so sorry... my son... The stick... Find the stick...  
*(He dies)*  
*(Lighting dims briefly on the “Estate” and brightens on Study)*

#### SCENE 10: THE STUDY OF 221 B BAKER ST. / STAMFORD ESTATE

**Holmes** *(To Watson)* I allowed Stamford some private moments with his father as I pondered the significance of the bizarre message the Judge had received. *(Walks to blackboard and refers to message)* What could it mean? It seemed reasonable to assume that the message was in some way connected to this strange Colonel Moran, who has some kind of sway over Judge Stamford. If the message was in code and the Judge understood it, then the two men knew each other well enough to have shared common experiences— perhaps some shared secrets rooted in their past. And when I thought of the past, I zeroed in on the word “past” contained in the message. Notice, Watson, the placement of the word.  
*(Circles the word with chalk)*

**Watson** I’m afraid the significance escapes me.

**Holmes** In an instant the key of the riddle was in my hands, and I saw that every third word after the first would present a message which might well drive Judge Stamford to despair. *(Underlining each word)* “Your past is known— Doctor has demanded all payment due or else we go to newspapers... Only two things remained to be discovered. What was the secret that Colonel Moran held over a man as respected as Judge Stamford? And, who was the accomplice Moran referred to as “Doctor?” When I was told of Judge Stamford’s last words— “the stick, find the stick” — I immediately remembered our discussion about the Judge’s walking stick and how he had fortified it.  
*(Stamford re-appears with Judge’s walking stick and examines it)*

**Holmes** It stood to reason the Judge may also have added a secret compartment to the stick and I suggested as much to our mutual friend, Stamford. *(Stamford removes letter from compartment in stick top)* In rather short order he found the compartment and a letter from his father...  
*(Stamford is seen reading letter)*  
*(Part of what follows may be re-enacted)*



**Judge's Voice** *(Lighting shifts emphasis to special lighting on Stamford and dim lighting in "Estate" area)*  
"My dear son, if you are reading this, then it is likely that disgrace has cast a shadow on the close of my life—and for that I am truly sorry. I was hoping to avoid scandal, but when your friend, Holmes read so much of my past merely at a glance, I realized perhaps others could, as well. Many years ago, my dear, dear mother became ill and I could not afford the treatment she needed. I embezzled money I fully intended to repay, but was caught before I could replace it. I was sentenced to a prison ship. While on the ship, I was befriended by Colonel Moran, who said he had been sentenced for a bank job he pulled that had been master-minded by a Professor Moriarty to set up a criminal organization and they kept in touch through coded messages. Moran tried to recruit me for their work, but I refused. A sudden and violent storm ship-wrecked us. I never knew who lived, who died, and who escaped. I regained consciousness in Australia and had no trouble convincing those who nursed me that I was the survivor of a passenger ship that foundered. I assumed a new name, prospered in the mining business, returned to England, and became re-established here as an appointed Judge in a country estate—hoping and praying my past was behind me forever. I hope you can find it in your heart to understand and to forgive me... *(Stamford slowly exits)*

**Holmes** *(Lighting shifts emphasis to Holmes and Watson in Study)*  
Our friend, Stamford, of course was devastated. I helped him turn over all the evidence to Scotland Yard, but the blackmailers have proven too elusive for capture.  
*(Music fades)*

Through the years, with the help of his slippery right-hand man, Colonel Moran, and other recruited, well-paid henchmen such as Culverton Smith, Professor Moriarty has established an underworld empire second to none. In honor of the Stamford family and in the name of justice I have worked tirelessly to break this despicable organization built on blackmail and the misery of innocent victims. The majority of my most recent cases can be traced to the Professor—who threw away a brilliant academic career in a mad pursuit of fortune and power. Again and again, I have breathed down his neck. And now I am close—oh so close to defeating him! I tell you, my friend, if you ever write an account of the contest between myself and Moriarty, it will go down as the most intense bit of thrust-and-parry work in the history of detection!... And now he knows. He knows I am on the brink of victory. Moriarty cannot buy Culverton Smith's freedom and Smith will surely tell everything he knows to avoid the gallows. That, along with my own testimony and the evidence I have amassed means the end of Moriarty. His visit here was one last desperate attempt to win me over. His failure to do so, along with the physical description of him I can now provide, makes him even more dangerous.

**Watson** And it places you in greater peril.

**Holmes** Indeed. It is obvious, therefore, that I cannot do better than get away for the time being, until the rest of Moriarty's gang is finally rounded up. Will you join me?

**Watson** Do you have to ask?

*(The figure of Moran stalks Baker Street from audience, air gun pointed toward Study)*

**Holmes** Thank you, my friend. It will be in your best interest, as well. I have no doubt that as long as any members of Moriarty's gang are at large, we shall be at risk—and undoubtedly watched. Therefore, I propose—

*(Moran fires shot into Study, upsetting books mounted on shelves and toppling bric-a-brac)*

*(Music begins)*

**Holmes** *(Urgently, pushing Watson down)* Watson! Get down! *(Both fall to the floor)*

**Constable** *(In Baker Street audience area, shouting to Moran)* You there! *(He chases Moran out)*

**Holmes** *(Helping Watson up)* Time is short. I planned for this contingency. *(Looks at pocket-watch)* Ah, yes. Salvation is nigh! You will find a coach waiting for you at our back door. It is driven by a fellow with a heavy black cloak trimmed in red. He is my brother, Mycroft. Into this you will step and you will reach the Victoria train station in time for the Continental Express. They won't expect us to be so well prepared.

**Watson** Where shall I meet you? *(They don coats and hats)*

**Holmes** At the station. I arranged my own means of getting there.

**Watson** What is our destination?

**Holmes** Switzerland. Let's be off, then. Time is of the essence. The game is afoot!... *(They exit)*

*(Music rises)*



*(Lights dim to black as we hear the sound of a train and:)*  
**Watson's Voice** If you had told me when I got out of bed that morning that I would be traveling to Switzerland that very night with Sherlock Holmes, I would not have believed it. But I had grown accustomed to the unbelievable in my association with the master detective. By train and by boat, and again by train, our journey took us from the English channel to Brussels, Strasbourg, and finally to Geneva...  
*(Lights up)*

### SCENE 11: REICHENBACH FALLS, SWITZERLAND (Downstage and Upstage)

*(The dull roar of a waterfall and the pastoral sounds of nature are heard)*  
*(Holmes and Watson appear through audience, with knapsacks and binoculars. Watson surveys a map with Holmes as the two pause amidst various villagers passing by; Holmes looks warily about)*

**Watson's Voice** We eventually wandered as ordinary tourists well into Switzerland along the Rhone River. It was clear to me that never for one instant did Holmes forget the shadow which lay across him. We had just registered at a local inn Holmes had secured in advance when we received a disturbing message from the innkeeper...  
*(Downstage area)*

**Innkeeper** *(Approaching Holmes)* Mr. Holmes...  
**Holmes** Yes?  
**Innkeeper** *(Handing him message)* This just arrived from London— for you, sir.  
**Holmes** Thank you for searching me out. *(He eagerly opens envelope as Innkeeper exits)*  
**Watson** Holmes— I remember you sent a telegram to Scotland Yard from Brussels. Is this the reply?  
**Holmes** *(Reading)* Yes... *(Frustrated)* I might have known it! He has escaped!  
**Watson** Moriarty?  
*(Music fades)*

**Holmes** They have secured the entire gang with the exception of him. Once again, he has given them the slip. Of course, when I left the country, there was no one to cope with him. I really thought I had put them all in the hands of Scotland Yard this time... Watson, I think that you had better return to England.

**Watson** But why?  
**Holmes** Because you will find me a most dangerous companion now. This man's occupation is gone. He is lost if he returns to London. If I read him correctly, he will devote all his energies to revenging himself upon me. He said as much in our short interview. I recommend you return to your practice... Leave me for your own sake... please...

**Watson** Never.  
*(Watson converses with an animated Holmes as they walk upstage)*

**Watson's Voice** We argued the question at length but continued meandering. Whether I was truly persuasive or Holmes secretly appreciated my continued company, I cannot say. But the question of whether I would leave or not soon gave way to our admiration for the beauty around us. I could still tell by his quick glancing eyes and his sharp scrutiny of the increasingly fewer faces that passed us that he was convinced to matter how far we walked, we could not walk far enough to clear ourselves of the danger dogging our footsteps. Even so, he remained cheerful. He continued to point out that if only he was sure society could be free of Moriarty, he would cheerfully bring his own career to a conclusion...

**Holmes** *(Surveying "landscape" with Watson)* Well, Watson, here we are— well off the beaten path, with nary a soul around to crowd our magnificent view of the Reichenbach Falls. *(Pulling Watson back)* Careful my friend. It's a long drop into the chasm.

**Watson** Rather breathtaking, isn't it?  
*(Music begins, reflective mood)*

**Holmes** A powerful torrent of water indeed— and yet, strangely peaceful to gaze upon. I wonder, Watson, how anyone can look at the beauty and grandeur of creation without acknowledging the active presence of the Creator... I only hope that my life has been useful in some small way to serve His purpose. I think I may go so far as to say, Watson, that I have not lived wholly in vain. If my

record were closed tonight, I could still survey it with satisfaction. I am not aware of having used my powers or exerting my efforts upon the wrong side. But I pray, Watson, that your memoirs of my exploits will not draw to an end until that moment I crown my career by the capture or extinction of the most dangerous and capable criminal in Europe...

**Messenger**

*(Approaching in a hooded cloak)* Mr. Holmes? Mr. Sherlock Holmes?

**Holmes**

Yes?

**Messenger**

Then you must be Doctor Watson.

**Watson**

I am.

**Messenger**

I had a time finding you two. It's quite a walk to Reichenbach Falls. The innkeeper has sent me to look for you, Doctor. It's a matter of some urgency. *(Messenger hands Watson a note, which he reads)*

**Watson**

And old Englishwoman staying at the inn is suffering from a hemorrhage. The physician thinks she only has a few hours to live. But she doesn't want a Swiss doctor. She wants an English doctor and it would be a great comfort to her if I would come back to the inn and look after her...

Well, I can't very well refuse the request of a fellow citizen dying in a foreign land. But I say, Holmes, I hate to leave you.

**Holmes**

I'm certain there is no need for concern now. The only way back is the way we came and it's a simple enough path for me to navigate.

**Messenger**

I would be happy to accompany Mr. Holmes.

**Holmes**

You see. Then it's settled.

**Watson**

All right. But be careful—and don't be too long.

**Holmes**

Very well, my friend. Tend to your mission of mercy and don't worry... Good-bye.

**Watson**

*(After a hesitation)* Good-bye. *(Pats Holmes on the shoulder and exits through audience)*

**Messenger**

*(After a pause)* What a lovely, tranquil place this is...

**Holmes**

*(Without turning to him)* Yes, indeed... Professor.

*(Music begins)*

*(Messenger removes hood, mustache, glasses, etc. to reveal himself as Moriarty. Holmes turns to him and the men regard each other for a moment)*

*(Black out)*

**Watson's Voice**

Very little remains for me to tell. It pains me to recall the details, but I am aware it is my duty to present the facts. I know Holmes would want nothing less... I proceeded as quickly as I could back to the inn...

*(Downstage area lighting rises as Watson rushes toward Innkeeper, who is sweeping)*

**Watson**

Well, I've come as quickly as I could. I trust the woman is no worse...

**Innkeeper**

I'm sorry. I don't know what you mean.

**Watson**

*(Handing her the letter)* You did not write this? There is no sick Englishwoman here at the inn?

**Innkeeper**

No. But this letter has the mark of our inn on it—ahh! It must have been written by that strange Englishman who came by after I gave you that message from London. He asked where I found you and I pointed the way you were headed. He said that he—

*(Watson runs from her, through audience, and back to main upstage area)*

*(Lights shift accordingly)*

*(Music intensifies)*

**Watson's Voice**

I waited for no further explanation. It had taken me a half hour to come down the trail and, despite my best efforts, another hour passed before I found myself at Reichenbach Falls once more...

*(Music becomes somber and reflective)*

*(Watson enacts what is described in his narrative, kneeling to examine the soil, etc)*

**Watson's Voice**

The solitary sight of Holmes' deerstalker cap turned me cold and sick. There was no sign of him and it was in vain that I shouted...

**Watson**

Holmes!... Holmes!... *(Utterly dejected; to himself)* Holmes.

**Watson's Voice**

What happened? I stood for a moment to collect myself, for I was dazed with the horror of the thing. Then I thought of Holmes' own methods and tried to practice them in reading this tragedy. It was, alas, only too easy to do. The black soil is kept forever soft by the incessant spray of water. Two lines of footprints were clearly marked along the end of the path toward the edge of the cliff. There were none returning. Near the very edge, the soil was tramped down into a patch of mud...

evidence of a great final struggle... It could only have ended with the two men locked in each other's arms, reeling over the edge. I concluded there, deep down in that dreadful cauldron of swirling water would lie for all time the most dangerous criminal and the foremost champion of justice of their generation... There was nothing to do now except pick up Holmes' cap and go home...

*(Watson picks up the cap and notices paper falling out from inside it)*

**Watson's Voice** But— almost as if God Himself sent it— I received a last word of greeting from my dear friend, which had fallen out of his cap. Unfolding it, I found that it consisted of three pages torn from his notebook and addressed to me. It was characteristic of the man that the writing was as firm and precise as though it had been written in our study. I read it over and over again as I journeyed home...

*(Watson reads note while slowly walking through audience and returning to the Study, which he enters)*

**Holmes' Voice** My dear Watson... I write these few lines through the courtesy of Moriarty, who awaits my convenience for the final discussion of those questions which lie between us. He has been giving me a sketch of the methods by which he avoided Scotland Yard and kept himself informed of our movements. They certainly confirm the very high opinion I had formed of his abilities. I am pleased to think that I shall be able to free society from any further effects of his presence, though I fear that it is at a cost which will give pain to my friends, and especially, my dear Watson, to you. But no possible conclusion to my career could be more congenial to me than this. In truth, I was also convinced the message you received from the inn was a hoax, and I allowed you to depart under the persuasion that some development of this sort would follow...

*(Lighting shifts to— and Watson enters)*

## SCENE 12: THE STUDY OF 221 B BAKER STREET

*(Watson sits in Study chair, pondering note, and examining nearby blue envelope)*

**Holmes' Voice** Tell Inspector Lestrade that the papers he needs to convict the gang are contained in a blue envelope and inscribed "Moriarty." I made every disposition of my property before leaving England and placed it in the hands of my brother Mycroft. Please give my fondest greetings to Mrs. Hudson, and believe me to be, my dear fellow, very sincerely yours... Sherlock Holmes...

*(Music: The simple reflective sound of a single violin)*

*(Watson picks up Holmes' violin and gazes upon it)*

**Watson's Voice** I could not imagine what life held for me now. All I knew was that it appeared I would be facing a difficult future... a future without my dear friend— the best and wisest man whom I have ever known— Sherlock Holmes.

*(Watson holds violin tightly to his chest and cries)*

*(Music ends on single violin note as:)*

*(Lights fade gradually)*

*(Blackout)*

*(End of Act I)*

**INTERMISSION**

## ACT II

### **MUSIC: ENTR'ACTE (“Theme From ‘Sherlock Holmes’”)**

*(At close of Entr'acte, before lights rise, Watson's Voice is heard)*

*(Music continues as underscore)*

**Watson's Voice** In 1891, at the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland, Sherlock Holmes solved his final problem and at last settled his account with Professor Moriarty—the most dangerous criminal of his generation. Holmes had achieved the destruction of his archenemy only at the cost of his own life...  
*(Lights rise)*

### **SCENE 1: BAKER STREET, LONDON AND 221 B STUDY / REICHENBACH FALLS**

*(Passing Londoners briskly walk the “street.” Among them: a newsboy, a decrepit old bookseller, and Watson, who is slowly walking through audience toward Study, In Study, Mrs. Hudson is seen packing a box with books, and dabbing at tears with her handkerchief; various vendors are heard hawking their wares)*

**Watson's Voice** It had been several weeks since my dear friend plunged to his death, deep down under the swirling waters of the Falls, where the infamous criminal and the foremost champion of justice of his generation will lie together for all time. Even now— there is hardly a nook or a cranny in all of London that does not remind me of my old friend, and I walked around in a foggy stupor...  
*(Watson purchases flowers from a vendor as Newsboy hawks newspaper and magazine)*

**Newsboy** *(Holding up both items for sale)* Strand Magazine! Read Doctor John H. Watson's account of “Sherlock Holmes' Final Fight to the Death!” Strand Magazine! And get your Daily Telegraph! Hot off the press!” “Local Prankster Smashes statues of Napoleon! Scotland Yard Baffle!” Extra, extra! Read all—

**Watson** *(Approaching Newsboy)* Hello, Billy. I'll have one of each, please. *(Hands over coins)*

**Newsboy** Good morning, Doctor Watson. *(Hands over publications)* I want to say again how sorry I am— about Mr. Holmes.

**Watson** *(Patting him on the shoulder)* Thank you.

**Newsboy** We sure do miss him...

**Watson** So do I, Billy. So do I... *(Bookseller bumps carelessly into him)* Oh! I beg your pardon.

**Bookseller** *(He bends over to help pick up some knocked down books)*  
No wonder you're bumping into people. *(Reads headline)* "Prankster Smashes Statue of Napoleon." Ha! What next, I wonder? It's a strange world—a strange world, I tell you. *(Watson grabs his paper)*

**Watson** Here are your books. *(Hands over books)* Good day to you. *(Approaches Study and enters, absently glancing at Strand Magazine)*  
*(Bookseller, Newsboy, and other vendors briefly continue milling about, later exiting)*

**Watson's Voice** My association with Sherlock Holmes had understandably interested me deeply in crime and, after his disappearance, I never failed to read with care the various problems which came before the public. I even attempted, for my own private satisfaction, to employ his methods in their solution, but my own meager efforts resulted in little more than mediocrity. I suppose it was my way of escaping the truth that I must move on and pack up at 221 B Baker Street...  
*(Music fades)*

**Hudson** Good morning, Doctor. I've taken the liberty of starting to box some of your books. *(Sniffs and sobs)* Oh!... I just can't believe it!...

**Watson** There now, Mrs. Hudson. *(Hugging her)* In time, God will heal our broken hearts... Oh, I brought you these flowers—I thought they might help cheer you... and bring some color to a room that will soon be empty.

**Hudson** Thank you, Doctor. You're always so thoughtful... I shall miss you.

**Watson** I promise I won't be a stranger. And whenever you need the services of a doctor, you know you can rely upon me...

**Hudson** Yes, indeed, I shall. And I—

**Bookseller** *(Barging in)* Oh, I'm sorry to come barging in like this. But I have a conscience, sir, and when I saw you go into this house, I came hobbling after you. I thought I'd just step in and tell you that if I was a bit gruff in my manner, there was no harm meant. And I'm much obliged for your picking up my books. Dear lady— could you fetch an old man some tea? *(Hudson glares and exits)*

**Watson** Now, now— you're making too much of a trifle. If you don't mind—

**Bookseller** And I thought perhaps you're a fellow book collector. *(Holding up books)* Here's a "British Birds" and "Gardening for Beginners" and "Euclid's Theorems" and "Plato's Republic"— a bargain every one of them. Why, with four volumes, you could just fill that gap on the shelf. It does look untidy, sir, does it not?

**Watson** *(Turning to shelf)* The shelf? Oh, that. Well, I'm packing up my belongings and that gap is from the books in this box. I have no need of any more books and— *(Turning back to face the "Bookseller," dumbfounded)* And—! — *(Watson tips forward, faint at the sight of Holmes— who has shed the Bookseller disguise)*

**Holmes** *(Catching Watson and helping him to chair)* My dear Watson! I owe you a thousand apologies. I had no idea that you would be so affected.

**Watson** *(Gripping Holmes by the arms)* Holmes! Is it really you?! Can it be true that you are alive? Is it possible that you succeeded in climbing out of that awful abyss?!

**Holmes** Just a moment. I'm afraid I have given you a serious shock by my unnecessarily dramatic reappearance. Are you sure you're really fit to discuss such things?

**Watson** I'll be all right— but— Holmes! I can hardly believe my eyes. Good heavens! To see you back here in our study! *(Gripping his arm again)* Well, you're not a spirit, anyhow! My dear chap— I'm overjoyed to see you. Please! Tell me how you ever came out of that—

**Hudson** *(Entering with tea and seeing Holmes)* Ahhhh!

**Holmes** *(Grabbing tea set before Hudson drops it)* It's all right, Mrs. Hudson.

**Hudson** *(Crying and laughing at once)* Oh! Oh, Mr. Holmes! It is you! *(Hugging him)* Oh, you're alive after all! I'm so very happy to see you! Oh, Mr. Holmes!...

**Holmes** *(Extremely uncomfortable at being hugged, gently pushing her away)* Yes, dear lady. Everything is all right.

**Hudson** *(Composing herself)* Oh, I'm so happy— so happy... *(Suddenly hitting him on the shoulder with her fists)* What did you do that for?! You broke our hearts!!

**Holmes** *(Gently rebuffing blows)* There now, Mrs. Hudson— I'm sorry for what I've put you through. It's all in the line of duty, I assure you. My cases, you know.

**Hudson** Humph! You and your cases! *(Softening)* Well... *(Hugging him again)* It is good to have you back...

**Holmes** *(Gently pushing her away)* Thank you, Mrs. Hudson.



**Hudson** *(Abruptly turning back to him and throwing one more punch)* But don't do that again!... All right... Have your tea... I'm going out to have a good, long cry!... *(Exiting)* One minute he's dying. Then he's all right. Then he's dead. Then he's alive. May God have mercy on us all!...

**Holmes** *(Chuckling)* I can't say that I blame her *(Stretching himself absurdly)* Ahhh! What a relief to stretch myself, Watson. It is no small thing for a tall man to take a foot off his stature by stooping for several hours on end in this guise. Now, my friend, we have a full day or two of work ahead of us. Perhaps I should give you an account of myself when that work is finished.

**Watson** Holmes! I'm too full of curiosity. Tell me now.

**Holmes** You'll help me in my new pursuits?

**Watson** When you like and where you like!

*(Lighting begins shifting emphasis as "Reichenback" area is lit dimly)*

**Holmes** Ah! Then we are indeed back to the normal state of things— like the old days. Now— about that chasm at Reichenback Falls. I had no serious difficulty in getting out of it, for the very simple reason that I was never in it.

**Watson** You were never in it?...

*(The following is re-enacted in shadowy tableau with Holmes, or a double, and Moriarty)*

**Holmes' Voice** No, Watson. My note to you was absolutely genuine. When I quickly realized the messenger was, in fact, Moriarty, I had little doubt the end of my career was at hand. I obtained his courteous permission to write the note and I left it with my cap. I then walked to the end of the pathway with Moriarty at my heels. As I stood at the edge, he drew no weapon, but rushed at me— throwing his long arms around me. He knew his own game was up and was only anxious to revenge himself upon me. We tottered together in the brink of the fall. Then I remembered my study of baritsu— the Japanese system of defense— and I slipped through his grip. He clawed the air madly with both his hands. But, for all his efforts, he could not get his balance, and over he went. Leaning over the brink, I saw him disappear into the mists... Now, of course, you wonder about the tracks you saw. Two sets went down the path and none returned. I realized God had placed an opportunity before me. I could not count on the arrest and conviction of every single member of Moriarty's gang— not to mention former members. Some might escape or be freed on technicalities. Certainly some would swear vengeance upon me. I scaled the rocky wall beside me. If my opponents were convinced with the rest of the world that I was gone forever, they might eventually drop their guard and I would have them last...

*(Lighting emphasis on Study resumes)*

**Holmes** One of two of the old gang are up to some mischief. And they have dropped their guard. They shall soon be within my reach once and for all.

**Watson** But Holmes... I was there. How did you climb that cliff?

**Holmes** *(Picks up Strand Magazine)* In your rather picturesque account of the matter, which I read with great interest a few days later, you assert the wall of the cliff was sheer. That was not literally true. A few small footholds presented themselves and I had to risk the dangerous Moriarty's voice screaming at me out of the abyss as I struggled toward safety. Once or twice— as tufts of grass came out in my hand— I thought I was gone. But I finally reached a ledge in time to see you, my dear Watson, and the others you summoned, investigating the circumstances of my death— in a most inefficient manner, I might add.

**Watson** Well, I did my very best to see that—

**Holmes** At last, when you all had formed your inevitable and utterly erroneous conclusions, you returned to the inn. And I plunged into obscurity. I had only one confidant— my brother, Mycroft, whom I depended upon for funds I needed temporarily. I owe you many apologies, my dear Watson, but it was imperative that I should be thought dead and I doubt that your account could have been as convincing if you yourself knew the truth. But I come to you now because the time is finally ripe.

**Watson** You must mean the results of the trial.

**Holmes** Not the outcome I had sought. The trial of the Moriarty gang had left at least two of its most dangerous members— my own most vindictive enemies— at liberty and free to return to their sordid old ways. The worst of the lot is Colonel Sebastian Moran.

**Watson** He was the one in league with Moriarty in the blackmail scheme against Judge Stamford— your first case.

**Holmes** Precisely. Do you feel a creeping, shrinking sensation, Watson, when you look at snakes in the zoo and see those slithery, venomous creatures staring with their deadly eyes and wicked, flattened faces? That is how Colonel Moran impresses me. *(Pulling out a file, opening it)* My collection of

M's is a fine one. Moriarty himself is enough to make the letter illustrious. And here is Matthews the blackmailer, and Morgan, the poisoner. And here is Moran...

**Watson** *(Looking over Holmes' shoulder)* I see you've made a note there— "The second most dangerous man in London."

**Holmes** With Moriarty's demise, he is the most dangerous. But as I wandered the docks in various guises I befriended a traitor to Moran. We have been communicating discreetly and he has kept me informed of what he knows of Moran's activities. It is a blessing indeed that Moran does not inspire loyalty. But, Moran apparently suspects this traitor, who calls himself Porlock. Porlock passed me this coded message and was about to tell me the key to it when he ran away. *(Writes coded message in chalkboard, which he copies from a scrap of paper)*

**Watson** Ran away? Perhaps he spotted Moran in the vicinity.

**Holmes** Quite likely. But it is futile to have vital information in code without a key to it. I am familiar with a host of ciphers but this one is new and unique. Look at it: "534 C2 14 27 36 31 HARKER 4 17 21 KENSINGTON."

**Watson** Hmmm. Very strange.

**Holmes** Because the numbers do not run very high, I suspect it is a reference to the words in a page of some book. Until I am told which page and which book, I am powerless. *(Begins pacing)*

**Watson** But why "Harker" and "Kensington?"

**Holmes** Clearly because those are words which are not contained on the page in question.

**Watson** If only he had told you the book...

**Holmes** Let's assume it refers to a book. That is our point of departure.

**Watson** A rather vague one.

**Holmes** Perhaps we can narrow it down with pure reason. From the code, what indications do we have about the book?

**Watson** None.

**Holmes** Oh, come, come, Watson. It surely is not as bad as that. The cipher message begins with 534. We may take it as a working hypothesis that 534 is the page to which the cipher refers. So our book has already become a large book, which is surely something gained. Now, what else may we learn about this large book? The next sign is C2. What do you make of that?

**Watson** Chapter two, no doubt.

**Holmes** Hardly, Watson. Surely you would agree that if the page is already given, the chapter number is irrelevant. And if page 534 finds us only in the second chapter, the length if the first one must have been really intolerable!

**Watson** *(With sudden realization)* Column!

**Holmes** Brilliant, Watson. You are positively scintillating this morning. It refers to the second column or I am very much mistaken. So now, you see, we may visualize a large book, printed in double columns. Have we reached the limits of what reason may supply?

**Watson** I fear that we have.

**Holmes** We have not! You do yourself an injustice. Had the volume in question been an unusual one, he would have passed it to me. At the very least, Porlock seems to have assumed that the book would be one I would have no difficulty in finding myself. He had it and he imagined that I would have it as well. In short, Watson, it is a very common book.

**Watson** It certainly seems plausible.

**Holmes** A large, printed in double columns, in common use...

**Watson** The Bible!

**Holmes** Good, Watson, good. But not, if I may say so, quite good enough. Even if I accepted the compliment for myself, I could hardly name any volume less likely to lie at the elbow of an underworld contact. And the Bible has so many versions and editions. We may consequently eliminate the dictionary. The book we're after is clearly standardized. He knows his page 534 will correspond to my page 534. What then, is left?

**Watson** An almanac!

**Holmes** Excellent, Watson! Let us turn to Whitaker's Almanac. *(Does so)* It is in common use, has the requisite number of pages, is printed in double column— ah— page 534, column two. A page, I perceive, dealing with rational crops and commerce. Jot this down, Watson. Word number fourteen is... "vegetable." But a particularly auspicious beginning. Number twenty-seven is... is... "man." Somewhat more promising. Perhaps a reference to another contact.

**Watson** Perhaps a vendor in the marketplace.

**Sandeford** Did Miss Morse tell you how much I paid for the little statue?  
**Holmes** No, she did not.  
**Sandeford** Well, I am an honest man— though not a very rich one. I only paid fifteen shillings for it. And I think you ought to know that before I take the ten pounds you offered me in your telegram.  
**Holmes** Your integrity is most honorable, Mr. Sandeford. But I have stated my offer and I shall abide by it.  
**Sandeford** Well, thank you, Mr. Holmes. That is very kind of you. (*Pulling out bust of Napoleon*) Here it is... You know, my wife has always contended that there is a distinct resemblance between myself and the emperor. Ha, ha! Can't say I see it myself.  
**Holmes** (*Abruptly, intent on his own purpose, and grabbing the bust*) Neither do I... (*Placing bust on table*) Ah... The sixth Napoleon... Now, Mr. Sandeford— (*Hands him a document*) — Of you'll just sign this paper in the presence of these witnesses, simply to relinquish every possible right to the bust and transfer it to me, you understand...  
**Sandeford** I'll be happy to. (*Signs paper*)  
**Holmes** I'm a methodical man and one never knows what turn of events might take later. (*Receiving paper from Mr. Sandeford*) Ah, yes. Good. Very good. (*Briskly ushering Sandeford out door*) Here is your ten pound note and I thank you. Good evening to you and good-bye... (*Closes door on him*) (*Sandeford mumbles his thanks in bewilderment as the door is slammed in his face*)  
**Holmes** Now, gentlemen— if I may have your undivided attention...  
  

(*Music begins*)  
(*Holmes dramatically raises the bust for his final scrutiny. Replaces it on the table, produces a hammer, and ceremonially smashes it to the astonishment of Watson and Lestrade*)  
**Holmes** (*Plucking a sham object from the rubble*) Gentlemen— allow me to introduce you to one of the most valuable objects in all the world. The famous Black Pearl of the Borgias.  
(*Watson and Lestrade begin to applaud*)  
**Watson** Bravo, Holmes! Bravo...  
(*As the men exalt, the pearl is passed by Holmes to Watson to Lestrade and back to Holmes as each peer closely at the find*)  
**Lestrade** The Black Pearl of the Borgias had been missing for a year— one of the greatest unsolved crimes ever.  
**Holmes** Until now.  
**Watson** Yes— I remember the theft. It was stolen from a traveling museum collection, wasn't it?  
**Lestrade** I'm afraid so. Terribly embarrassing for Scotland Yard.  
**Holmes** Yes. You'll recall I was consulted on the case at the time— but not until well after the trail was cold. It was a crime masterminded by Professor Moriarty in league with Colonel Moran. Beppo was their hired agent for the theft. (*Holding up scrapbook*) His unusual name struck a chord when I heard it at Miss Hilda Morse's shop. I knew the name from somewhere. When I learned he also worked at Gelder and Company, shot a man, and led a chase back to his place of employment— only to be arrested there— I looked up the account in the newspapers. (*Opening scrapbook*) And there it was. Beppo Venucci. It all fit together. The man Beppo shot was a museum guard, who gave chase because he suspected Beppo of lifting the pearl. Beppo, in fact, had stolen it. He fled to the Gelder and Company warehouse and languished briefly in the drying area. He knew he had only seconds in which to conceal the pearl, which would otherwise be found on him when he was searched. Of all the plaster objects drying that day, he headed for the batch of six Napoleon figures earmarked for Hilda Morse's shop. The base of one of them was still soft— and that is where he concealed the pearl.  

(*Music fades*)  
**Watson** An admirable hiding place.  
**Holmes** As soon as Beppo was released from prison, he secured employment at Hilda Morse's shop and began systematically tracking down the six Napoleons. Of course, only Beppo knew the secret hiding place and was thus able to string Moran along. But no one knew exactly which Napoleon contained the pearl.  
**Watson** Beppo surely knew his life wouldn't be worth much to Moran if Moran knew the secret.  
**Holmes** As Porlock sadly discovered, life is very cheap to Colonel Moran. He undoubtedly sent Porlock to follow Beppo, played the two off one another, and proverbial falling out among thieves resulted from the paranoid triangle. Moran discovered Porlock turned informant and killed him at Harker's hoping Beppo would take the fall if he was ever caught.  
**Watson** Diabolical.

**Holmes** After the murder at Harker's home, two Napoleons remained. Moran took no more chances and insisted on accompanying Beppo. The closest of the two remaining Napoleons—

**Watson** Was in Chiswick— Miss Brown's residence. Hence, our vigil last night.

**Holmes** Excellent, Watson. And that left only the Reading bust belonging to tonight's guest, Mr. Sandeford. I bought it, in your presence, and there it lies.  
*(Watson and Lestrade smile and nod)*

**Lestrade** *(Approaching Holmes, with sincerity)* Well, Mr. Holmes. I've seen you handle a number of cases. But I don't know if I've ever seen a finer display of your talents than in this case. We're proud of you. Very proud. And if you come visit us tomorrow, there's not a man, from the oldest inspector to the youngest constable who wouldn't be glad— and honored— to shake your hand.

**Holmes** *(Visibly moved)* Thank you... I thank you...

**Watson's Voice** As Holmes turned from Lestrade, it seemed to me that he was more nearly moved by softer emotions than I had ever seen him. And yet, in a flash, he was the cold and practical thinker once more...

**Holmes** Watson— be sure to put the pearl in the safe, won't you? Good-bye Lestrade. And if any little problem comes your way, I shall be happy, if I can, to give you a hint or two as to its solution. *(He shakes Lestrade's hand and closes the door behind him. He picks up his violin and begins playing)*  
*(Music begins— soft, sweet sound of the violin)*  
*(Mrs. Hudson enters with tea. She joins Watson in raising their tea cups in a salute to Holmes. Lestrade is seen walking through audience amidst many passersby walking about. Among them is a figure obscured by a newspaper held high, as if being read)*

**Watson's Voice** A truly surprising few weeks came to gratifying close at last. But, I am pleased to say, the end of every case only means the beginning of a new one. I have learned to accept the amazing twists and turns that come with my affectionate association with the world's first private consulting detective... a singularly satisfying relationship that continues to this day. And I shall always count it an honor to record for all time the adventure of my very dear friend... Sherlock Holmes...

**Newsboy** Extra! Extra! Read Doctor John H. Watson's account of Sherlock Holmes' triumphant return to London! Extra! Read all about it! "Sherlock Holmes is Back!"  
*(The figure reading newspaper lowers it to reveal his face)*

**Moriarty** And so am I... *(He begins laughing)*  
*(Music rises to crescendo)*  
*(The sound of Moriarty's sinister laughter echoes to crescendo)*  
*(Lights slowly dim)*  
*(Black out)*  
*(Lights up for bows and music)*

**The End**