

# SHERLOCK HOLMES: JOHN WATSON'S BODY

By **C.P. Stancich**

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# SHERLOCK HOLMES: JOHN WATSON'S BODY

By C.P. Stancich

**SYNOPSIS:** The great detective and his loyal sidekick are at odds. While Dr. Watson has gone to investigate the possible theft of a priceless set of emeralds at the London home of Lord and Lady Delton, Sherlock Holmes remains at Baker Street entertaining his friend, the adventurer, Oscar Dove. Holmes believes his friend is on a fool's errand, but when Dr. Watson reports finding and then losing a body, Watson, Holmes and Dove are drawn into a web of murder, larceny and intrigue. The body turns out to be surprisingly agile, and the suspects range from dubious aristocrats, to doubtful servants, to notorious members of the criminal class.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(4 female, 7-8 male)*

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| SHERLOCK HOLMES (m)..... | The great detective. <i>(250 lines)</i>  |
| WATSON (m).....          | A true-blooded Englishman, bright enough...unless he stands next to Holmes. <i>(141 lines)</i> |
| DOVE (m).....            | An impetuous adventurer. <i>(105 lines)</i>  |
| LADY DELTON (f).....     | 30-40 years old, a level-headed aristocrat. <i>(55 lines)</i>                                  |
| LORD DELTON (m).....     | Her husband, slightly older, blustery. <i>(50 lines)</i>                                       |
| IRIS CLAYPOOL (f).....   | A family friend, wry and worldly. <i>(41 lines)</i>  |
| BENTON PAYNE (m).....    | A gentleman, charming. <i>(35 lines)</i>   |
| MRS. COX (f).....        | A housekeeper. <i>(23 lines)</i>   |
| ROSE (f).....            | A maid. <i>(40 lines)</i>  |
| BUSBY (m).....           | A boy, 11-15: a former Baker Street Irregular. <i>(50 lines)</i>                               |
| BRADSTREET (m).....      | An inspector, kind of a dandy for a copper. <i>(48 lines)</i>                                  |

**EXTRA:**

GERARDI (m).....A body. (*Could double with  
BRADSTREET*) (0 lines)

**SETTING**

**221B BAKER STREET**

It is a winter evening in 1898. Two gentlemen's armchairs at far left corner of stage.

**THE NURSERY AT BELTICK HOUSE**

A dusty rocking horse, a divan, dust covers, right side of the stage.

**THE DRAWING ROOM AT BELTICK HOUSE**

A manor house drawing room. Exits left-up and center-up. Two sofas facing each other. A medium-sized table covered with a cloth long enough to conceal a body) and a chair, down right. A grandfather clock, far right, upstage of the table. Chairs and a table down left. Small tables near the sofa. Any ephemera befitting a Victorian townhouse.

**SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

ACT ONE, SCENE 1: Baker Street, and the nursery at Beltick House.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2: The drawing room at Beltick House.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3: The same, the next morning.

ACT TWO, SCENE 1: The same, later that morning.

ACT TWO, SCENE 2: The same, later that afternoon.

ACT TWO, SCENE 3: The same, an hour later.

**PRODUCTION HISTORY**

*Sherlock Holmes: John Watson's Body* by *C.P. Stancich* was originally produced by the Theater Company of Lafayette, CO from October 25 to November 17 in 2012 with the following cast:

SHERLOCK HOLMES ..... Jason Boughn  
DR. WATSON ..... Don Thumim  
OSCAR DOVE ..... Artemus Samarzia-Martin  
LADY DELTON ..... Kirsten Jorgensen Smith  
LORD DELTON ..... Fred Sandal  
IRIS CLAYPOOL ..... Jenn Zuko Boughn  
BENTON-PAYNE ..... Doug Hawkins  
MRS. COX ..... Veronica Straight-Lingo  
ROSE ..... Mandy Scott  
BUSBY ..... Gavyn Bazylak & Darr Davis  
BRADSTREET/GERALDI ..... K.B. Krause  
  
Director ..... Madge Montgomery

DO NOT COPY

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*To Lorrie & Tim Thompson*

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ACT ONE, SCENE 1

**SETTING:**

221B Baker Street and the nursery at Beltick House, Norwood. The action alternates between the two settings.

**AT RISE:**

Lights up on BAKER STREET, discovering HOLMES and DOVE, seated in easy chairs. HOLMES fills his pipe, looking on with expectation as DOVE studies a manuscript.

**HOLMES:** (*Bemused.*) What do you think?

**DOVE:** (*Distracted, reading.*) About what?

**HOLMES:** (*Rolls his eyes.*) My dear Dove, for someone interested in detection you can be remarkably obtuse. You saw the surreptitious glee with which I purloined that manuscript from Watson's desk. You can imagine the sort of wiggling I'm in for if he finds I've been showing off an unfinished adventure. What do you deduce my motive to be?

**DOVE:** (*Sets down the paper.*) Well, I deduce that you want my opinion. Or rather, you want me to support your opinion. I can't do that, old boy. I have never found his accounts of your cases "florid," as you are wont to say, and I don't see that this one starts off in a worse way.

**HOLMES:** You don't find the opening lines to echo the worst excesses of Mister Bulwer-Lytton?

**DOVE:** In what way?

*HOLMES springs to his feet in frustration.*

**HOLMES:** You don't see it? He practically parrot's the phrase "It was a dark and stormy night!" (*HOLMES shivers in disgust, DOVE cocks his head.*)

**DOVE:** Holmes...it was a dark and stormy night. I was there, remember? I heard Miriam Cray tell the story just as you did. When she and those other women found Spendlove's body in Blackmeade Park, it was—

**HOLMES:** —twilight! If it was dark, they would have found nothing. Mrs. Cray would have missed the man's dying words, and a great villain would have been free to murder the remaining spinsters of Blackmeade.

*DOVE rolls his eyes. HOLMES gathers himself and sits down.*

**DOVE:** You are splitting hairs. What you are proving to me is what I already know...that Doctor John Watson is a saint for putting up with you. (*HOLMES barks out a single derisive laugh.*) Now Holmes, you know that I am fascinated by your methods, your deeds, your personality itself. But it only took sharing rooms with you for a few brief months, and I was driven across an entire ocean to get clear of you.

**HOLMES:** Where, in less than a dozen years you amassed a fortune to make an earl blanche with envy. Oh, I know you like to credit your childless uncle and plain luck for your start, but you discovered your facility for deduction came in the business opportunities of America, not in my line of work. (*DOVE considers and nods.*) And yet...

**DOVE:** And yet?

**HOLMES:** And yet you pine.

**DOVE:** Pine?

**HOLMES:** My dear Dove, since you turned up during the persecution of the unfortunate Edward Banks, you have made it clear in every silence that you nurture a regret about missing out on my adventures.

**DOVE:** Oh, that. Yes...

**HOLMES:** Every other utterance has been to express good-natured envy for John Watson.

**DOVE:** Of course. He shares your adventures and puts up with you. I couldn't.

**HOLMES:** On this we agree. But you also exude an air of anticipation. You yearn to be invited along on cases. I'm not fanciful or poetic, but there are some days I can positively feel your yearning wafting on the morning breeze.

**DOVE:** (*Laughs.*) From the Savoy? Their ventilation is better than that, surely.

**HOLMES:** I do not say you are as annoying as young Busby, who, since Blackmeade, has become a positive nuisance. But he's a boy, and anyway, Watson encourages him.

**DOVE:** And why not? He's a bright lad. And before you run away with this constant "air of anticipation," as you call it, please remember that since returning from Blackmeade I have visited you only once. And I lunched with Watson...once. I admit that I would rather be on the hunt with you, but I'm a man of business. I do not sit in the Savoy Hotel and pine. I haven't even been in the country for the past fortnight. Or have you felt this particular yearning wafting in from Hamburg and Antwerp recently?

*HOLMES laughs. DOVE joins in briefly.*

**HOLMES:** Yes, all right. I over-stated the matter.

**DOVE:** And made me feel self-conscious. I've forgotten how to do that...since I became rich. And I didn't call on Baker Street to pine after you. I came to see Watson. Is he expected, or have you driven him away at last?

**HOLMES:** As a matter of fact I have. You find Sherlock Holmes at home. It is Watson who is on a case.

**DOVE:** Really?

**HOLMES:** You have heard of the Nicholescu Emeralds.

**DOVE:** The...(Considers, then recoils.) Oh, yes! The Transylvanian necklace. I remember, it was just before I left for New York. It was in the papers. Some chap—

**HOLMES:** --Lord Delton—

**DOVE:** Paid a fortune for them. Yes...that's going back a few years. Bought them as a present for his wife, didn't he?

**HOLMES:** His second wife. It was ostensibly an anniversary present, but according to Lady Delton, the necklace was really to celebrate the birth of a son.

**DOVE:** You know Lady Delton?

**HOLMES:** I had a brief interview with her today, in this very room. It was remarkable for two reasons.

**DOVE:** (*Leaning toward Holmes.*) Really?

**HOLMES:** First, because while Lady Delton had perceived the Emeralds were under threat of being robbed, she could offer me no particulars...beyond that the intelligence had come through her husband.

**DOVE:** And the second?

**HOLMES:** I had been warned off the case. A message arrived by hand...a half hour before Lady Delton's carriage even turned onto Baker Street. It was from the husband, assuring me the situation was resolved and that I was on no account needed for whatever errand Lady Delton had engaged me to undertake.

**DOVE:** (*Laughs.*) The countermand arrived before the offer. And so naturally you pressed her for an explanation?

**HOLMES:** Naturally.

**DOVE:** And what? Don't tell me she remained as vague as her husband's note.

**HOLMES:** More so, if that's possible.

**DOVE:** No. You wouldn't have liked that. No doubt you explained that you could not undertake to...not without full disclosure of the circumstances...and the trust...

**HOLMES:** (*Sighs.*) I was saved the trouble. The interview grew farcical. Even Watson's susceptibility to a woman in distress balked. He explained that I could not possibly undertake...etcetera.

**DOVE:** And what did she say?

**HOLMES:** She merely stated that the circumstances would become clear once I arrived on the scene to deduce them.

**DOVE:** (*DOVE waits for more, then stirs himself.*) Yes, flattering...and completely circular. You declined, of course.

**HOLMES:** Yes, and got Watson's "devastated gentleman" look. So I condescended to recommend Messers Hewlit and Co...perfectly acceptable enquiry agents. She looked sad. So I suggested the bank vault hence the jewels had come. She looked forlorn. Whereupon I lost my patience and Watson lost his hold on common sense.

**DOVE:** Really? So Watson has gone off...

**HOLMES:** To a house party...in Norwood, of all places. Where he will find he's to be frustrated...discover himself in the middle of a domestic dispute, and have a sleepless night into the bargain.

*A light rises from up right, back-lighting the rocking horse and the divan, right. WATSON appears upstage in the light.*

**DOVE:** So you haven't sent Watson off into danger.

**HOLMES:** *(Offers a low laugh.)* Nothing is certain. But I believe his very presence will insure that the evening will offer nothing of note.

*Lights down on Baker Street. WATSON advances on the divan; ROSE moves on stage, blocking the light.*

**ROSE:** *(Nervously.)* I'm sure there's nothing here Dr. Watson.

**WATSON:** I certainly hope you are right. But your mistress heard something, and she believes it came from the old nursery. Since I'm here to investigate—

**ROSE:** But you're a doctor?

**WATSON:** Yes...by day...is there gas laid on up here?

**ROSE:** Don't know. This place ain't been used since before I came into service.

*WATSON turns to the dust-cover on the divan, he steps to it, but ROSE tugs at his sleeve, making him jump.*

**ROSE:** Let's clear off, Doctor. I don't like it here.

**WATSON:** Well you needn't stay. I'll just be a moment.

**ROSE:** *(Grunts derisively.)* Her Ladyship says show the good doctor the nursery, she don't mean to leave him alone. *(Takes a deep breath.)* I'll be all right, long as nothing jumps on my imagination.

**WATSON:** *(Patronizingly.)* Good girl. *(Reaches for the dust cover.)* I'm sure we'll find nothing to spark our imaginations here, but a little dust.

*WATSON pulls away the dust cover quickly, revealing GERARDI, laying wide-eyed and motionless, hand clutched at his throat. There is a one-count as both stare at the body. Then they turn to each other. WATSON manages to get two words in before ROSE begins to scream.*

**WATSON:** Ah...now—

*ROSE screams in terror, turns and runs off, toward the light, up. She is off stage before her screams become articulate. WATSON tries to stop her, taking two steps upstage*

**ROSE:** *(Off; loud but receding.)* Murder!—Murder!—Murder!.

*WATSON looks after ROSE, listening as her cries are joined by distant queries. Then he turns back to the body.*

**WATSON:** So, Holmes. Nothing more than a domestic charade, eh?

*WATSON steps toward the body, when there is general shouting off, punctuated by a loud scream from ROSE. The hub-bub increases, causing WATSON to roll his eyes and turn back. ROSE's next utterance will cause him to sigh and give up the idea of examining the corpse.*

**ROSE:** *(Far off.)* The Mistress! The Mistress!

**WATSON:** *(WATSON reaches for the dust cloth.)* I suppose you're not going anywhere.

*WATSON covers the body as PAYNE and CLAYPOOLS calls come from off stage.*

**PAYNE and CLAYPOOL:** *(Almost as one.)* Doctor Watson!

**WATSON:** *(WATSON turns and exits, up.)* Coming!

*Lights out on the nursery. HOLMES strikes a match at Baker Street, then the lights come up on HOLMES and DOVE, seated as before.*

**HOLMES:** *(Applying the match to his pipe.)* Of course I should—had I known your exact whereabouts—have referred the entire matter to you. You are even more the man of action than Watson.

**DOVE:** Thank you...I think.

**HOLMES:** Not at all. You have your uses, and you have more self-discipline than you did...though you are still more impetuous than Watson.

**DOVE:** Am I?

**HOLMES:** Yes, had you told me of your intended profession I would not have predicted success. A cattle baron or gold baron, certainly, but in the buying and selling of shares...

**DOVE:** Ah, well in that world, I'm not impetuous. Adventurous, certainly. *(Sighs.)* And dutiful. I've had letters.

**HOLMES:** From America?

**DOVE:** *(Nods.)* From my uncle...and others. They accuse me of having altogether too much fun. I send them word of this deal or that one, but it just makes them more anxious. They subtly remind me of my responsibilities there. It's flattering I suppose, but also annoying.

**HOLMES:** When will you go?

**DOVE:** Not until April. Oscar Dove will not jump when bidden, and I had enough of the North Atlantic in winter when I came over.

**HOLMES:** So...two months...Watson will be sad to see you go. Not to mention Miriam Cray. Or will she be one of your English imports?

*They exchange smiles.*

**DOVE:** Well-spotted. Yes I have considered it...broached the subject when last by Blackmeade. I don't think it will happen.

**HOLMES:** But you seem so well matched. You enjoy each other's company, you each have a sense of adventure, and of course there are the opportunities for detection.

**DOVE:** Detection?

**HOLMES:** Crime. I observe merely that when your orbits coincide, there is murder.

*DOVE laughs, HOLMES smiles.*

**DOVE:** An observation the Widow Cray has made. But no. She may have been tempted. But as she says, she has enjoyed her freedom too much since losing her husband. And she's a little older than I am. She knows that my uncle has no other heir and thus expects me to marry some young woman, preferably of hearty American stock...to continue the family name.

**HOLMES:** *(Smiles.)* Alas.

**DOVE:** *(Squinting.)* Now Holmes—

**HOLMES:** (*Protesting.*) I mocked only your wistful tone of voice. If Miriam Cray has made a pronouncement, I see no reason to doubt it. She knows far more of love than I ever shall, and is far more level-headed than you will ever be; and she would never make such a call without thorough and systematic deliberation.

**DOVE:** You make her sound a complete paragon. I'm beginning to regret giving in.

**HOLMES:** She is a paragon...but her own person.

*There is a pause.*

**HOLMES:** So...just a single set of luggage on the ship.

**DOVE:** (*Considers, then smiles.*) Funny you should mention that...

*Lights down on Baker Street. A light comes on from the open entrance to the nursery. The cloth is in place, but GIRARDI is missing. WATSON appears at the doorway, looking back, off-up, stops to reply to the conversation that is happening off stage.*

**PAYNE:** (*Off.*) I really do think you should stay out.

**LADY D:** (*Off.*) Nonsense!

**WATSON:** I think, Mister Payne—

**PAYNE:** Benton-Payne.

**WATSON:** What? Uh...yes. I think, if there is a chance at identification, and if Lady Delton feels up to it—

**LADY D:** Of course I feel up to it.

**WATSON:** Forgive me, I didn't intend—

**CLAYPOOL:** (*Off.*) Do we know who it is?

**LADY D:** Not yet! The men haven't finished patronizing me.

**WATSON:** I assure you, Lady—

**LADY D:** Yes Doctor. Can we...?

*WATSON moves further onto the stage, followed by PAYNE carrying a lamp, LADY D, and CLAYPOOL.*

**WATSON:** Yes, sorry.

**LADY D:** Believe me, I've got a sulking husband who's taken to his bed sick, and survived a hysterical maid-servant flying into me down the stairs—

**CLAYPOOL:** It's a wonder both of you didn't break your neck...uh, necks.

*LADY D turns to CLAYPOOL, then looks back to WATSON and continues.*

**LADY D:** So I am ready for anything.

*There is a pause as WATSON waits for more. As it becomes awkward, he stirs himself and turns toward the divan.*

**WATSON:** Right. I don't think he was too badly disfigured...

*WATSON lifts the cloth, revealing nothing. There is a pause. WATSON misses the revelation, looking towards the others for a reaction. CLAYPOOL strains at the back to see. WATSON turns back, discovers the body is missing, and drops the cloth. As the other regard each other, WATSON looks on the downstage side of the divan, then under it.*

**CLAYPOOL:** I don't understand.

**PAYNE:** Recognize anyone, Margery?

**LADY D:** Oh, very droll, Rudolph.

**WATSON:** I don't understand.

**CLAYPOOL:** Didn't someone just say that?

**LADY D:** *(To CLAYPOOL.)* Yes, you did.

**WATSON:** But he was here.

**CLAYPOOL:** I did what?

*LADY D shushes CLAYPOOL.*

**WATSON:** Right here. The maid and I both saw him. And then before I could make an examination, she ran screaming out of the room, and there was all that chaos below.

**PAYNE:** He means you, Margery.

**LADY D:** Yes, I know. Believe me, my shoulder will be a mass of bruises by morning.

*Enter COX*

**COX:** I've managed to settle Rose, Your Ladyship.

**LADY D:** Thank you, Mrs. Cox.

**COX:** Beefsteak to her forehead and a large brandy.

**LADY D:** Was that Lord Delton's brandy?

**COX:** I'm afraid so, Madam.

**LADY D:** Good. Serves him right, hiding away in his room all night.

**WATSON:** I say...Mrs. Cox...

*WATSON looks to COX but gives up, causing PAYNE to flinch into a smile.*

**PAYNE:** I believe Dr. Watson wants to know if you've...tidied up a body in that last quarter of an hour or so.

**LADY D:** Oh shut up, Rudolph.

**COX:** No sir, I've not been up these stairs, not with Her Ladyship being incommoded, and Rose taking on so.

*There is a considerable pause.*

**CLAYPOOL:** Did someone mention brandy?

**LADY D:** I suppose the rest of the staff is accounted for?

**COX:** Yes, Madam. Kitchen staff is below stairs. Mason is sitting with Rose, and John and Arthur are below. I told Arthur to wait, as Your Ladyship requested, in case the Doctor wanted to add to his messages.

**PAYNE:** (*Snorting.*) The sensible Lady Dee! (*To WATSON.*) Saved you some embarrassment, what?

**LADY D:** Oh shut up, Rudolph. If you want to do something useful, take Iris down for another brandy.

**PAYNE:** Right. Come on Iris. We've been put down for supernumeraries.

*PAYNE hands the lamp to Watson and starts off with CLAYPOOL.*

**CLAYPOOL:** Oh really? That's fine...but any make of brandy will do for me.

*Exit PAYNE and CLAYPOOL.*

**WATSON:** Lady Delton, with your permission, I would like to postpone calling in the police.

**LADY D:** Under the circumstances, I agree. My husband already thinks I've gone over the top with this business, even though he started it. I wouldn't like to give him any ammunition until we're sure.

**WATSON:** Good, then I will revise my telegram to Holmes, and we'll employ your footmen...

**COX:** John and Arthur.

**WATSON:** John and Arthur, to watch the exits. Uh...exits...how many?

**COX:** Three sir. Front door, back door, and the area below.

**WATSON:** Right. Well, kitchen staff can watch the area, and the footmen the other doors. That way no one can leave without being noticed.

*COX looks to LADY D, who nods.*

**COX:** Very well, sir.

*Exit Cox. LADY D observes WATSON with a mixture of consternation and amusement.*

**LADY D:** Well, doctor?

**WATSON:** *(Distracted.)* Mmm?

**LADY D:** What do you make of it?

**WATSON:** Lady Delton...I'm at a loss. I shall summon Holmes, of course, but I don't feel I should sit idly. *(Considers.)* I suppose Rose will be all right to question, once her hysterics have passed.

**LADY D:** More like histrionics. What can she tell you?

**WATSON:** She's the only other who saw...what I saw. I should like to know if she recognized...it.

**LADY D:** Well she has only been with us a short time, but she knows everyone attached to the household...and they are all accounted for.

**WATSON:** Are they? Forgive me, Lady Delton. I noticed no butler.

**LADY D:** Sent to Delton Magna, our estate, by my husband...to deal with the estate manager.

**WATSON:** Your lady's maid? Lord Delton's valet.

**LADY D:** Well, Mason, my maid, is sitting with Rose. My husband discharged his valet a fortnight ago and has been making do with Arthur.

**WATSON:** I see. Thank you. Well, I shall still talk to Rose, and then with your permission, I think Mrs. Cox, Mr. Benton-Payne and I should search the house. I've no idea why it should have gone, but it should certainly not have gone far.

**LADY D:** You're sure it was dead?

**WATSON:** My dear Lady Delton. In my time in India, as a police surgeon and with Holmes, I've seen death in most of its forms. I didn't have a chance to make an examination, but that man expressed death most vividly.

**LADY D:** Right. Well then, you make your search, Doctor. I'm going to wake up my husband. Sulks or no sulks, sleeping draft or no, he's not going to sleep through this.

*Exit WATSON and LADY D. Lights down on the nursery. After a one-count, lights up on Baker Street.*

**HOLMES:** Busby! Dove, not you, too!

**DOVE:** What do you mean?

**HOLMES:** What is it about that lad that inspires everyone to such philanthropic zeal?

**DOVE:** You should know if anyone does. You discovered him.

**HOLMES:** As one among the multitude of street urchins. Quicker and more forward than most...apt enough for the Baker Street Irregulars. If I favored him it was because he was observant, kept his mouth shut, and followed instruction.

**DOVE:** And you yourself said he was very handy at Hurlstone and especially at Blackmeade.

**HOLMES:** For which he was rewarded generously with coin of the realm. A fine, brave lad, but I did not offer to raise him from his station in life. This was not because he didn't deserve it, but because I had—unlike Watson and now it seems, you—a realistic view of my ability to sustain the responsibility I would be taking on. First Watson secures him the job in the telegraph office...and makes me vouch for him—

**DOVE:** And is he not thriving?

**HOLMES:** Not in the way Watson would like to think. He learns, but with no appreciation of it. He is resourceful, but only when he's interested. He has the cheek to insinuate he is on errands for me to get him out of work when he doesn't want to be there.

**DOVE:** Good god, Holmes, what a terrible accusation to level: Busby is a boy.

**HOLMES:** That is exactly what he is! And to seek to change him obliges one to more responsibility than merely finding him employment and subscribing him a few lessons in basic literacy. It's a father's or mother's responsibility. Or a guardian's or a schoolmaster's. Watson is none of these. I am certainly not. What, my dear Dove, are you prepared to be?

**DOVE:** *(Smiles.)* You know, Holmes, I've heard this lecture before. It comes from crypto-pragmatists who say "how can you help one out of so many?" or "if you assist him, where will it end?" But I notice when you say it, it's usually when you've helped somebody, and you feel vulnerable to a charge of sentimentality or tenderheartedness.

**HOLMES:** *(Lifting a hand in defense.)* And I've heard this rebuke before; it comes from Watson. Very well. I stand aside.

**DOVE:** *(Surprised. reluctantly optimistic.)* You do? You'll raise no objection?

**HOLMES:** I will, if he asks, explain the magnitude of your offer. But I won't have to; Watson is sure to do that as soon as he hears of it.

**DOVE:** Good.

*There is a pause.*

**HOLMES:** But Dove...

**DOVE:** Yes.

**HOLMES:** You had better be sure.

*Before DOVE can answer there is a commotion without. Heavy footfalls on steps. BUSBY calls from a distance, off.*

**BUSBY:** Mister Holmes! Mister Holmes!

*HOLMES and DOVE regard each other.*

**HOLMES:** Heavens! Is he clairvoyant?

*BUSBY enters breathless, up, holding a telegram. He looks to HOLMES, then DOVE, then bends at the waist to catch his breath.*

**HOLMES:** *(With flat lack of concern for his animation.)* Why Busby, how odd, we were just talking of you. You haven't knocked Mrs. Hudson over bursting through the foyer again, have you?

*BUSBY straightens briefly, and shakes his head. Then bends again.*

**DOVE:** All right. You built our anticipation. What is it?

**BUSBY:** *(Draws a deep breath, then shouts.)* Doctor Watson's Body!  
*(There is a pause. BUSBY suddenly gather's himself and turns to leave.)*

**HOLMES and DOVE:** *(As one.)* Busby!

*BUSBY halts, turns and waits. When he gets no follow up he shouts again, thrusting the telegram into HOLMES' hand.*

**BUSBY:** Doctor Watson's body is MISSING!

*HOLMES reads as BUSBY turns and scurries out. HOLMES clucks a laugh and continues reading. There is a two-count, and BUSBY returns.*

**BUSBY:** Oh, hello Mister Dove. *(He turns again, calling over his shoulder.)* I'll fetch a cab!

*BUSBY exits, leaving the others to look after him. As they continue to look off, HOLMES hands DOVE the telegram.*

BLACKOUT

## ACT ONE, SCENE 2

### **SETTING:**

*The drawing room at Beltick House, Norwood. Later that evening.*

### **AT RISE:**

*Lights up on BUSBY, looking around the stage. As he moves around he is observed by ROSE, who watches him with suspicion and consternation.*

**ROSE:** *(Losing patience.)* What' y'doing?

*BUSBY ignores her and continues snooping.*

Got the fidgets?

**BUSBY:** I'm observing.

**ROSE:** Well you won't find anything here. They all been in and out of here...and the whole house's been searched, up and down. *(Waits for BUSBY to desist, loses patience.)* What are you looking for then?

**BUSBY:** *(Irritated.)* Nothing. Anything. I'm lookin' because this is where I was left, right? Mister Holmes says wait here, here's where I wait. But if I wait here, and there's somethin' to see, and I don't see it, then he'll give me one of them looks of his.

**ROSE:** Looks?

*BUSBY approximates a look of amused disappointment.*

**BUSBY:** I don't mean to get one of them looks tonight. Mind you, the Doctor says if I'm gonna assist Mister Holmes, I might as well get used to them looks. But I'm not partial to that, so I'm keepin' my eyes open.

**ROSE:** You assist him a lot?

**BUSBY:** *(Tries puffing himself up.)* Oh yeah. Well, whenever he needs my special talents. *(Considers.)* Not as much as I want. But I owe him and the Doc. They got me this job running messages, and I ain't livin' rough no more. I'm grateful, just wish there was more to do in their line, that's all. I'd'a liked to'a been there tonight with you and the Doc, findin' a body.

**ROSE:** And you'd'a been welcome. I went to pieces.

**BUSBY:** You look all right now.

**ROSE:** Well it was hours ago, wasn't it? And anyway, I'm not likely to show myself having hystericals to the likes of you. Got my pride. And now it don't seem real. Since they say that body's disappeared...

**BUSBY:** You see it gone, then?

**ROSE:** Must be jokin'! Not going back up to that room any time soon.

*Enter Mrs. COX.*

**BUSBY:** I'd have a look...*(Looks aloft.)* If I was invited.

**COX:** Rose, I thought you were given permission to take yourself off to bed?

**ROSE:** I was, thank you, Mrs. Cox. But I didn't like to leave this one on his own, somehow.

**BUSBY:** Tah very much.

**COX:** Yes, well I do not think he will be staying much longer. The discussion upstairs seems to have concluded. You take yourself off.

**ROSE:** *(Bob-curtseys.)* Thank you, Mrs. Cox. But you watch him; fancies himself a charmer. *(Exits.)*

**COX:** Thank you, Rose. *(Looks to BUSBY.)* Well young man...what chance do you think you have at charming me?

**BUSBY:** This late, with all these ructions and all these extra people muckin' about? No chance at all.

*COX smiles, enter DOVE and PAYNE, up.*

**PAYNE:** Lady Delton told us he'd taken a sleeping draft and she couldn't rouse him.

**DOVE:** With all the shouting and the searching?

**PAYNE:** Oh it's true enough. I looked in on him myself just before you arrived. I shook Lord Delton and didn't get more than a grunt. Called to him, and he managed a snort. He has a surprise coming to him in the morning.

**DOVE:** And the other guest?

**PAYNE:** You mean Iris? Iris Claypool? Lady Delton's maid tucked her up nearly an hour ago. It might be indelicate to say it, but she made a bit more free with the brandy than she's used to. Don't think you'll get anything out of her tonight. Heaven knows what she'll remember in the morning.

**DOVE:** I dare say.

*There is a pause as DOVE nods to COX, and exchanges shrugs with BUSBY.*

**PAYNE:** I say...forgive the impertinence old man. You are Oscar Dove, aren't you? Land in Ontario, business in New York? That Oscar Dove?

**DOVE:** Yes.

**PAYNE:** And you're a chum of Sherlock Holmes. That is interesting.

**DOVE:** I'm an old acquaintance. I share an interest in his cases, and I happened to be there tonight when the telegram—

**PAYNE:** Yes, quite, quite. Look I know it's not the time...middle of the night, missing body and all that, but I was wondering—

*Enter LADY D, HOLMES and WATSON. LADY D is speaking. HOLMES heads directly to the table, up left, where he will sit and write in a notebook.*

**LADY D:** I really don't know. She was certainly hysterical, right, Doctor?

**WATSON:** (*Startled from another thought.*) What? Oh, certainly.

**LADY D:** I suppose my husband—had he been conscious enough to witness her—would have said Rose's hysterics were born of a superstition or lack of imagination owing to her class. But it is a mark of my husband's lack of imagination that, if I had seen the body and had hysterics, he would have attributed them to an excess of feeling owing to my breeding and refinement.

**HOLMES:** *(Over his shoulder.)* Yes I see.

**LADY D:** So I really can't give you an impression. Is it important?

**HOLMES:** *(Continuing to write.)* Lady Delton, at this stage, how can I know what is or may be important?

**PAYNE:** That's reasonable enough. There seems deuced little to go on.

**HOLMES:** Yes, Mr. Benton Payne. Everyone accounted for; no obvious signs of a break-in; nothing missing...except the body.

**PAYNE:** Well what do you propose to do?

*HOLMES ignores him, concentrating on his writing. He tears out a sheet from his notebook, folds it and make a note on the outside, then goes back to writing in the notebook.*

**LADY D:** Mr. Holmes proposes doing nothing for the moment.

**HOLMES:** I propose we get as much sleep as the night has left for us, then start again in the morning. My scribbling is preparation for such a start. Mrs...

**WATSON:** Cox.

**HOLMES:** Is the cab still waiting?

**COX:** Yes sir.

**HOLMES:** Thank you, Mrs. Cox.

*COX looks to LADY D, who nods. COX exits, up left.*

**PAYNE:** Well if you're proposing sleep, I propose getting to work on that straight away. Good night, gentlemen. *(Starts up, stops by LADY D.)* You know where I am, Marjorie. Give a shout. *(Takes a step, then halts and smiles.)* Better yet, have Rose do the shouting; only your husband could sleep through that.

**LADY D:** *(LADY D rolls her eyes, then smiles.)* Yes, good night.

*Exit PAYNE*

**HOLMES:** Watson, Lady Delton has placed her carriage at our disposal.

**WATSON:** That's very good of her.

**LADY D:** I'll just check on that. (*LADY D exits, up left.*)

**DOVE:** What about the cab?

**HOLMES:** The cab is for you. (*Holds the first note up.*) Busby!

*BUSBY crosses to HOLMES.*

You can drop Busby at his digs on your way back to the Savoy. Watson and I will head back to Baker Street within a quarter of an hour. We shall all have to be up early...those who wish to help, at least.

*BUSBY reaches for the note; HOLMES holds it aloft.*

Now Busby, in the morning...first thing, you are to take this to Scotland Yard.

**BUSBY:** (*Makes a sour face.*) Mr Holmes, not the nick.

**HOLMES:** (*HOLMES grunts to stop BUSBY's prevarication.*) You are to ask for Inspector Hopkins first. If he's not in, Inspector Bradstreet. And if he'd not in as well, Lestrade.

**DOVE:** I thought Lestrade was your favorite.

**HOLMES:** If we are assisting him.

**WATSON:** Yes, he's likely to drag his feet if he's got the wind up.

**HOLMES:** (*Gives a soft laugh.*) If he questioned the motives of his suspects as much as he questions mine, he wouldn't jump to so many erroneous conclusions. Now, Busby?

**BUSBY:** (*With fatigue.*) Hopkins, then Bradstreet, then Lestrade.

**HOLMES:** (*HOLMES hands over the note.*) And if Hopkins does ask why?

**BUSBY:** I don't know nothing.

**HOLMES:** Right. If he doesn't have an answer straight away, he can telegraph me through your employer, or send a message to Baker Street.

*BUSBY pockets the note, then moves left. HOLMES finishes the second note and tears it out of the books.*

**HOLMES:** Oh, and Busby?

**BUSBY:** Mr. Holmes?

**HOLMES:** The girl, Rose? What do you reckon?

**BUSBY:** Lambeth, sir.

**HOLMES:** Lambeth?

**BUSBY:** I'd put my wages on it...when I get paid.

**HOLMES:** And Mrs. Cox.

**BUSBY:** (*Hesitates.*) Well. Not London, but near. Surrey.

**HOLMES:** I concur. Watson?

**WATSON:** Near as I can tell.

*There is a pause. HOLMES smiles and holds up the second note.*

**HOLMES:** Now Dove...since you are so eager to taste the detective business one last time before you re-cross the Atlantic.

*DOVE grins and crosses to HOLMES.*

Your London agents are quick and eager?

**DOVE:** If they expect me to renew their retainer.

*HOLMES hands over the note; DOVE reads.*

**HOLMES:** As much as they can as quick as they can.

**DOVE:** Right. These four are no problems, but this last one...

**HOLMES:** Your challenge for the morning.

**DOVE:** Right. Report by when, noon suit?

**HOLMES:** At the latest. You can find me through Mrs. Hudson or through Busby.

*There is a pause, DOVE and BUSBY look to each other, then back to HOLMES. HOLMES, again writing, waves them away without looking up. They regard each other, smiling, then nod to WATSON and withdraw, up left. HOLMES tears a third note out and folds it. He swivels to face WATSON.*

**WATSON:** Well, they seemed happy.

**HOLMES:** Yes, I know. And I hate to encourage them. But I also wanted to be rid of them, so I gave them errands suited to their talents.

**WATSON:** How did we acquire Dove this evening?

**HOLMES:** He turned up just after you'd gone off to be gallant with Lady Delton. He was still there when your dispatch came. They both invited themselves along...expecting you had provided them with a new adventure.

*They regard each other briefly.*

**WATSON:** I'm sorry Holmes. But the body was there. I promise you—

**HOLMES:** *(HOLMES cuts him off with a raised hand.)* Watson. Would I dare to accuse you of fancy or blindness?

**WATSON:** Thank you, Holmes. I'm sorry not to have more for Dove to sink his teeth into.

**HOLMES:** Are you?

*They exchange glances. WATSON cocks his head and gives a so-so gesture. HOLMES tosses his head, clucking out a brief laugh.*

Well if Dove wishes to gooseberry, he may as well learn what happens when there is a scarcity of clues. If we have a dearth of physical evidence, then we move to the background of those involved. He will provide that for us.

**WATSON:** I must say I'm relieved to hear you complain of a dearth of physical evidence. I was convinced I must have missed something and was prepared for a ticking off from you.

**HOLMES:** *(Shrugs.)* Well...

**WATSON:** *(Cocks his head.)* Yes?

**HOLMES:** *(Hesitates playfully.)* It's nothing.

**WATSON:** *(Clears his throat, peeved.)* What did I miss?

**HOLMES:** Well...there is a trace of pomade still to be sniffed on the divan...which...confirms someone rested there. And there's a very interesting print in the dust between the carpet and the wall. A distinctive tread reminiscent of a certain rubber sole I've run across before.

**WATSON:** Special shoes?

**HOLMES:** Climbing shoes...of a peculiar sort of nocturnal climber...who specializes in urban edifices.

**WATSON:** The long expected burglar? Fell out with his cohorts or met with an accident and hastily hidden. Well that's something, I suppose. But damn it, whoever he was, he couldn't have been dragged away without a noise or a trace. And corpses don't get up and hide themselves.

**HOLMES:** *(Smiles.)* How many times have I told you...once you have eliminated the impossible, whatever is left—however improbable—must be the truth.

*Enter Mrs. COX, up left, carrying Watson's overcoat and hat.*

**COX:** The carriage is at the door, sir.

*HOLMES stands and pockets his notebook.*

**WATSON:** Thank you Mrs. Cox.

*COX helps WATSON on with his coat as HOLMES crosses to join them.*

**HOLMES:** You may tell your mistress that we will return by nine in the morning.

**COX:** Very good sir.

*Exit HOLMES, up left. WATSON accepts his hat and drifts left.*

**WATSON:** Tell me, Mrs. Cox: do you hail from Surrey?

**COX:** Born and bred, sir.

**WATSON:** *(Straightens his hat, smiles.)* Thank you, Mrs. Cox.

*Exit WATSON, lights down.*

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

**SETTING:**

*The same, the next morning*

**AT RISE:**

*Lights up LORD D, strutting angrily left and right, while PAYNE sits and observes him with amusement. GERALDI's body is concealed under the writing table, obscured by the tablecloth. LORD D looks to PAYNE and tosses his head.*

**LORD D:** *(Losing patience.)* What are you looking at?

**PAYNE:** An agitated rooster?

*LORD D. fixes PAYNE with a scowl and continues strutting.*

**LORD D:** It's a damn strange thing, when a fellow's home can be invaded at dawn...and in the middle of the night.

**PAYNE:** I thought you slept through the first visit.

**LORD D:** It's not the point! The man's a busy-body and my wife had no business getting him involved.

**PAYNE:** My dear chap, I thought it was you who first raised the alarm.

**LORD D:** Alarm!?! I got word that certain thieves might...might be coveting my wife's emeralds. I raised no alarm. I mentioned it to my wife, more fool I. I told her to leave it to me, and she rushes out and brings in the Sherlock Holmes Dog and Pony show. And while I'm in high dudgeon, Benton Payne, don't you "my dear chap" me. You're my wife's guest, not mine. I thought you were taking yourself off yesterday.

**PAYNE:** That had been my plan.

**LORD D:** And a fine plan it sounded to me.

**PAYNE:** But then there was talk of burglars, and there was discord between the Delton's. Iris and I both decided to stay. And a good thing, too, considering that Marjorie's husband and protector took a soporific and disappeared into his bedroom, leaving burglars and bodies the run of the place.

**LORD D:** The burglar and the body were supposedly one in the same, and they both disappeared into thin air anyway. And to hear Iris tell it this morning, my wife didn't bat an eye. While Rose had hysterics and that Doctor fellow didn't know what to think, Marjorie sailed right along.

**PAYNE:** She was magnificent!

**LORD D:** (*LORD D rolls his eyes.*) Trust you to encourage her.

**PAYNE:** Always. (*He stands.*) All right then, Lord Delton, to be fair, I shall encourage you. I shall take myself off for breakfast, and let you grumble in your own time.

**LORD D:** Magnanimous of you...in my own house.

**PAYNE:** (*PAYNE starts off, up, and pauses.*) Don't mention it...old chap.

*Exit PAYNE; LORD D grunts and looks after, then resumes his pacing. Enter WATSON, up left. LORD D, halts, regarding him.*

**LORD D:** Which one are you?

*WATSON advances, offering a hand that LORD D will ignore.*

**WATSON:** Lord Delton, I'm John Watson.

*There is an awkward moment, then WATSON withdraws his offered hand.*

**LORD D:** You were here last night.

**WATSON:** I was.

**LORD D:** Well where's the other one? Cox said you were both here this morning.

**WATSON:** If you mean Sherlock Holmes, he is either still interviewing Mrs. Claypool, or has proceeded on to an inspection of outside third story window sills.

**CLAYPOOL:** (*Off.*) The latter now. (*Enter CLAYPOOL, up left.*) I seem to have exhausted the interview a moment after you left us, Doctor.

**LORD D:** God, Iris. You're not involved in this, too?

**CLAYPOOL:** I'm afraid so. I wasn't very useful last night because I was barely more coherent than you. I made up for it before dawn this morning.

**WATSON:** Mrs. Claypool believes she heard something. A muffled commotion? Isn't that what you told Holmes?

**CLAYPOOL:** Yes...he congratulated me on my adjectives: muffled, brief, surreptitious...everything that a "commotion" isn't. (*Considers, inward.*) And yet that's what this one was. (*Sighs.*) And of course I heard it waking from a sound sleep...so I could not swear to any of it...except that it happened.

**LORD D:** (*Snorts.*) Wonderful, Iris.

**CLAYPOOL:** (*Squinting at LORD D.*) I don't fancy sarcasm this morning. I don't think Doctor Watson appreciates it, and he is, after all, trying to help.

*LORD D looks to WATSON, who offers to protest but gives up.*

**LORD D:** Probably doesn't appreciate you trying to pull him into a domestic spat, either. (*Raises a hand before either of the others can protest.*) So I'll withdraw to the dining room. I don't fancy dining with Benton Payne, but I need my morning coffee.

*LORD D starts off, up. WATSON attempts a protest, but LORD D shakes him off with a forced smile, and exits, up.*

**WATSON:** I take it you are old friends with the Delton's?

**CLAYPOOL:** Known them since before they were the Delton's. He was a young widower, she was a young heiress. Everyone applauded the match...and before you ask, yes, they were happy.

**WATSON:** Were? I'm sorry, Mrs. Claypool, but Holmes would stick at that...so I'm afraid I must.

**CLAYPOOL:** You must be twice a man of the world, Doctor. As a physician and a detective, you must have seen many marriages where the bloom is off the bud. She's raised his children—and theirs together—and gotten the last of them off to Harrow. He's become preoccupied. They have drifted.

**WATSON:** And the nature of his preoccupations?

**CLAYPOOL:** Oh. You wish me to be indiscrete? Should I betray what Marjorie has imparted in confidence?

*WATSON opens his mouth to protest, but CLAYPOOL presses on.*

It's all right. I'm not bothered. There is, alas, nothing of an extra-marital nature. Jethro, having produced a successor and met his lordly procreative obligations, is now concerned with other legacies. The family seat is crumbling...and consequently costing a packet.

**WATSON:** I take it you do not mean this place?

**CLAYPOOL:** No. Delton Magna, the country seat. The fall in agricultural prices coincided with the collapse of a couple of Jethro's more dubious schemes just when the "surveyor of the fabric" found Delton Magna more than a little frayed and threadbare. Jethro is proud...but also an idiot with money. Marjorie brought money to the marriage, but he won't ask her directly because it would mean giving up control of any repairs to her. There's pride, too, of course.

**WATSON:** And yet there must have been better times. Presumably he presented the Nicholescu Emeralds to her when he was more solvent. Or were they an heirloom?

**HOLMES:** (*Off, up left.*) An excellent question.

*Holmes enters as the others turn.*

It seems the story of Lord Delton purchasing the emeralds is apocryphal. Lady Delton informs me that they were the final installment of an inheritance from an aunt on her side of the family.

**CLAYPOOL:** Agnes Colston-Verne.

**HOLMES:** Quite so. On her death this aunt passed along some small properties, and an annual income. But the emeralds were held back by the trustees until the eve of Lady Delton's wedding. The executors allowed the bridegroom to make the presentation, hence the mistake.

**CLAYPOOL:** Aunt Agnes, sending a wedding present from beyond the grave. It was certainly the old girl's style. She was quite an adventuress in her day.

**HOLMES:** Which may have been how a set of emeralds known to have bewitched the nobility of the Carpathian Mountains came into her possession in the first place. By the way, Watson, did you ask Lady Delton to check on the necklace after the incident last night?

**WATSON:** *(Makes a face.)* I'm afraid, in the confusion—

**HOLMES:** Yes, well, fortunately for you, she checked on them without being asked. I've decided we deserve a look at them.

**CLAYPOOL:** I wish you'd persuade her to put them back in the bank.

**WATSON:** We both tried that yesterday when she came by Baker Street. Didn't we, Holmes?

*HOLMES takes his notebook out and proceeds to the table, where he sits*

**HOLMES:** In chorus and individually.

**CLAYPOOL:** *(Grunts.)* Stubborn.

**WATSON:** And yet she was willing to give reasons.

**HOLMES:** Stubborn people always have reasons. That they should bother to share them is either a sign of politeness or confidence, or both.

*During the following exchange, HOLMES will grow distracted by something on the tablecloth, then by something he knocks against with his foot. He will eventually look surreptitiously under the cloth.*

**CLAYPOOL:** Well she's both, of course. Always has been confident. Trusts in her reasoning. Jethro's all bluster. He wouldn't condescend to explain. Of course when it's one up against the other, then they're not polite at all. That's the way with married couples, don't you think? It certainly was with me and my husband.

**WATSON:** An invitation to wear them to the Duchess of Ableston's ball, I find a suitably compelling reason. But as Holmes pointed out yesterday, having brought them up to town, she could certainly have popped them in her bank's main branch until the day before the event itself.

HOLMES has his interlude with the table cloth, discovering the body, recoiling slightly, then smiling gently to himself. He will proceed as if nothing is untoward.

**CLAYPOOL:** Uh...Jethro egged her on. He doesn't like the manager of the city branch. Refuses to deal personally unless he's in the country.

*Enter Mrs. COX, up left.*

**COX:** Excuse me, Mr. Holmes. That boy from the telegraph office is here...at the front door.

**HOLMES:** Is he? Yes, he does that often. Well, Mrs. Cox, if you wish to chastise him for impudence in his choice of doors, you have my full support. I would like to raise two points. First, Watson will tell you chastisement means nothing to Busby...

*COX looks to WATSON, who stirs himself.*

**WATSON:** Uh, alas.

**HOLMES:** And second, before you take whatever steps you feel bound to take, could you please show him in...you know, on the off chance he is bringing some clarity into this increasingly murky business?

*COX rolls her eyes, and retreats off, up left. WATSON observes and smiles.*

**WATSON:** You know, I've seen Mrs. Hudson give that look a hundred times.

**HOLMES:** Housekeepers and landladies are of a tribe.

*Enter BUSBY, up left, carrying two envelopes.*

**HOLMES:** *(Without looking up.)* Busby! I trust you have something material to have come all this way?

*BUSBY holds up the envelopes. HOLMES still does not look up.*

**WATSON:** He bears epistles.

**HOLMES:** From the Yard?

**BUSBY:** Yes sir. Inspector Hopkins wasn't there. But I found Bradstreet...sleepy and surly. But your note made him laugh, and he spent some time on this...*(Holds out of the envelopes.)*

**HOLMES:** Watson!

*WATSON takes the envelope from BUSBY.*

**HOLMES:** And from Dove?

**BUSBY:** *(Flapping the second envelope.)* By hand, Savoy page boy, just when I got back to agency. It's thin.

**HOLMES:** So I would think, if he found something to report this early.

**WATSON:** *(Watson accepts the second envelope.)* He can't possibly have results already.

**HOLMES:** You think not? I set him to hunt in his own forest. But let him rest a while longer. I'm more interested in what Bradstreet has to say.

*BUSBY fancies he sees something under the tablecloth, makes a face, and will begin tilting his head to get a look; he is unobserved by all but HOLMES. WATSON opens the first letter.*

**CLAYPOOL:** Should I retreat? *(CLAYPOOL moves center up until stopped by HOLMES.)*

**HOLMES:** Mrs. Claypool, you will do us a service if you would please stay. Indeed we may soon be sending for others.

**WATSON:** *(Reading, laughs.)* You were right about Bradstreet being halfway between Lestrade and Hopkins. He's given you what you asked for but says he expects an explanation.

*BUSBY tilts his head, stooping low. His eyes grow wide with recognition and he opens his mouth to call, but is cut off by HOLMES.*

**HOLMES:** Yes Busby, I know. That'll do. Go on, Watson.

*BUSBY reluctantly gives up his excitement. WATSON aware of the side conversation but oblivious to its meaning, looks to Holmes, then reads. HOLMES will recoil with recognition when he hears the name.*

**WATSON:** (*Reads.*) Umberto Gerald. Also known as “Bert the Gibbet Gerald”—

**HOLMES:** Ah...Bert the Gibbet. It’s curious; the name has such a multi-tonal ring to it and yet my memory failed me.

**WATSON:** Born in Stepney, Italian father, English mother. Got his start as a boy lookout for the Perroti Gang. (*Stops reading, considers.*) Perotti Gang?

**HOLMES:** (*With a dismissive wave.*) Small-time...long defunct.

*WATSON hesitates, HOLMES gives him a hungry nod.*

**WATSON:** (*Reading.*) Cracksman, climber, thought to have been behind the rash of manor house burglaries in Bath and...(*Squints.*) This writing! Uh, “Bath and vicinity”, I think. That was year before last. Nothing heard in London lately.

**HOLMES:** So nothing on current associates?

**WATSON:** No. Just says, “full file to follow.”

*Enter LADY D, up left, carrying a large jewel case and in shock.*

**WATSON:** Lady Delton—

**CLAYPOOL:** Good god. Marjorie...what is it?

**LADY D:** The emeralds...

**HOLMES:** Gone?

**LADY D:** They were there last night, and...

*LADY D swoons, dropping the case. She is caught by WATSON and BUSBY and helped to a chair.*

**CLAYPOOL:** Marjorie!

**LADY D:** I’m all right...

**HOLMES:** Mrs. Claypool, would you ask Mrs. Cox to raise the alarm and make sure the lady’s husband and guest are sent for?

*CLAYPOOL hesitates half a count, then snaps into action, exiting up. BUSBY picks up the case. He starts to examine it, then sees HOLMES gesturing for it and reluctantly tosses it to him. LADY D tries to raise herself from a semi-recumbent position but is prevented by WATSON's ministrations...which she soon finds it necessary to fend off with irritation.*

**LADY D:** I assure you, Doctor, I'm quite all right.

**WATSON:** You have had a shock.

**LADY D:** For which I should have been completely prepared. I just couldn't believe he...I just couldn't believe it had happened. Yesterday had become so unreal.

**HOLMES:** I agree. Yesterday was not real.

**WATSON:** Holmes, I hope you're not implying that today is the same.

**HOLMES:** On the contrary. Today has become very real.

*There is a commotion without, as LORD D, COX, PAYNE and CLAYPOOL approach.*

**WATSON:** Or that I didn't see what I saw.

**HOLMES:** You saw exactly what you saw. I hope soon to be able to introduce you to him.

*Enter LORD D, PAYNE and CLAYPOOL, up. COX enters up left.*

**PAYNE:** Now Marjorie, what the devil's this? Iris says your shiners have gone.

**LADY D:** I'm afraid it's true.

**LORD D:** But I thought you checked last night.

**LADY D:** I did, Jethro. But the case is empty. Exactly where it was last night, but empty.

**HOLMES:** (*HOLMES snaps the case shut.*) See for yourselves.

*He tosses the case toward the crowd. LORD D ignores it; PAYNE catches it.*

**PAYNE:** (*Squinting, touching his temple as if in pain.*) So...a corpse witnessed by two people, comes back from the dead, vanishes into thin air until the house quiets down...then returns from thin air to clear out with the very gems he'd missed that evening.

*There is a general hub-bub. LORD D wins the contest for the floor.*

**LORD D:** Well there you are my dear. I told you running off to hire a private detective was a waste of time and money.

**LADY D:** I think doing nothing was just as effective. And Mr. Holmes agreed with you as it happens. It was Dr. Watson who—

**LORD D:** Amateur private detectives.

*The brouhaha starts up again, PAYNE and CLAYPOOL defending LADY D, WATSON defending himself; LADY and LORD D at each other. HOLMES watches for a moment, then raises his voice to gain control.*

**HOLMES:** I can assure you all. (*Pauses, smiling, then repeats.*) I can assure you all. That I can identify the thief.

*There is a murmur of astonishment. All eyes are on HOLMES.*

His name is Bert Gerald. He's a professional burglar, about forty, prefers to steal outside of London and fence his loot in town. He has never been particularly successful or ambitious, and he is known more for a mode of escape than for any noteworthy swag. On not less than two occasions, he escaped arrest by posing as a deceased victim of strangulation...until the backs of the authorities were turned. Now, Watson, it appears he performed an encore.

**WATSON:** Ah, hence the moniker "Bert the Gibbet."

**LADY D:** Well, what's become of him?

**HOLMES:** Well I don't know everything. What I do know, is that he was active just before dawn, when he met his fate. I also know that for that past quarter of an hour, I have had my left foot resting on his shoulder.

*HOLMES lifts the cloth with a flourish, revealing GERALDI on his side. There is silence for a one-count, then GERALDI slowly rolls out, resting face-down. There is a general gasp, and the company advances a few steps. Enter ROSE; she remains unnoticed and hidden by the others.*

**HOLMES:** No strangulation this time. I'd say a single heavy blow to the top of the skull, wouldn't you, Watson?

*The crowd erupts into discussion as WATSON pushes forward to examine the body. As he kneels, ROSE pushes through the crowd, ending up in front of them, looking at the body with rage.*

**ROSE:** What's going on here? What kind of treachery lives in this house!

*ROSE looks at the others, then realizes she has broken character. Hastily she screams a la Scene 1, and runs through the crowd, continuing to scream, and exits, up, the crowd looking after her.*

**BLACKOUT.**

ACT TWO, SCENE 1

**SETTING:**

*The same, later that morning.*

**AT RISE:**

*Lights up on DOVE, HOLMES and BUSBY. DOVE is seated on a sofa, HOLMES sits at the table, scribbling a note. BUSBY stands near HOLMES, who laughs.*

**HOLMES:** *(Grinning.)* It was delicious! It's so rare as a detective to actually discover the body, and then to find I'd been practically trodding on it for a minute or two before I looked!

**BUSBY:** He's a cool one an'all. Just kept on asking his questions. And then, when I twigged to it, he wouldn't let me say nothing either!

**HOLMES:** Well, I thought it better to let the theft of the emeralds play out first, since I fully expected Lady Delton would find them missing.

**DOVE:** As soon as you saw the burglar.

**HOLMES:** Yes. And I thought the revelation of this was a good excuse to have everyone into the room so I could observe them when I revealed the corpse.

**DOVE:** Looking for surprise, or lack of it.

**HOLMES:** Exactly.

**DOVE:** And?

**HOLMES:** If I had gone by visual response I would have arrested Watson straight-away. He gave a marvelous look of chagrin at my finding the body he'd lost, combined with relief that there actually was a body. It was just that mixed expression when a criminal is found out after guarding the secret of his guilt for a long time.

*BUSBY snickers. HOLMES points a finger at him.*

And you are not to tease him. Have you found me the nearest residence on the telephone?

**BUSBY:** *(Shrugs.)* The footman, Arthur, he didn't know. But the local bobby, he said there's a hotel on the next block...Allingham's?

*HOLMES looks to DOVE, who makes a note of the name. HOLMES tears a sheet out of his notebook and hands it to BUSBY.*

**HOLMES:** You're to take this to Sayer's Agency. You remember where it is?

**BUSBY:** Yes sir.

**HOLMES:** No reply. Right...off then.

*BUSBY scampers off.*

So, between you and Mrs. Cox, we have a line on the missing valet.

**DOVE:** Missing. You make him sound like a victim waiting to be found.

**HOLMES:** Well, he may not be missing, exactly, but his absence is noteworthy. And I suspect from some perspectives he is a victim. If my note brings him to Sayers, then he must be interviewed by Watson as soon as possible...possibly by you and Watson...with some carefully prepared questions. Unless you are off running down those other matters.

**DOVE:** *(Shakes his head.)* I've put all that in Christie's hands. He'll get you what you wanted if anyone in London can, and he knows to deliver his stuff to you if I'm indisposed. And now that we have a telephone...at Allingham's Hotel...any reason Delton doesn't have one?

**HOLMES:** I take it from his wife it's the same reason he hasn't converted to electricity; improvements of that nature go to Delton Magna first, and to the townhouse second.

*Enter WATSON and BRADSTREET, up left.*

**WATSON:** He almost certainly bled inter-cranially. There was a severe fracture. Though you notice the actual scalp laceration was on the small side.

**BRADSTREET:** So not so much bleeding to be seen?

**WATSON:** Well, apart from the small pool under the table, there is a smudge on the tablecloth and a patch two-thirds of the way down the front stairs. We also found a small smear on the finial at the bottom. Both that and the smear in here could be transference from the killer.

**BRADSTREET:** So the commotion that roused Mrs. Claypool might have begun at the top of the stairs...but it probably ended most of the way down.

**HOLMES:** Very good Inspector. I'm sorry, Dove; do you know Inspector Bradstreet of the Metropolitan Police. Inspector, Oscar Dove.

*DOVE stands.*

**BRADSTREET:** I know of Mr. Dove, of course.

*DOVE and BRADSTREET shake hands.*

**DOVE:** Inspector.

**BRADSTREET:** A pleasure, sir.

**DOVE:** You don't mind my tagging along with Mr. Holmes?

**BRADSTREET:** If I don't mind Mr. Holmes tagging along, and I never do—in spite of what he may have told you—then I'm sure there will be no difficulties.

**HOLMES:** Inspector, are your men searching the house?

**BRADSTREET:** Uh...Sergeant Marsh has that about ready to go.

**HOLMES:** And as we discussed, will that search be pointless, thorough, obtrusive, and generally annoying?

**BRADSTREET:** *(Smiling.)* Marsh tends to make that a specialty, sir.

**HOLMES:** Excellent. There are several people I would wish to annoy.

**WATSON:** *(Suppresses a laugh.)* Holmes! One might think the theft of a fortune in gems and a body in the drawing room annoyance enough.

**HOLMES:** One might. But I do not enjoy farce. And when someone tries to cast me in one, I find myself more than a little annoyed.

**BRADSTREET:** *(BRADSTREET nudges WATSON.)* Never mind, Doctor, you know he's got a better reason.

**WATSON:** *(Glancing to Holmes.)* Yes, which he's no intention of telling us. *(To DOVE.)* I hope you're taking note.

**DOVE:** It's nothing new to me, old fellow.

**BRADSTREET:** I must say, I was surprised to see The Gibbet on a stretcher. Had a sort of reputation...there was affection among the brother officers. Well there is, when someone isn't violent and manages to put one over on us. Hadn't heard any word on him for a few years. Thought he'd gone straight or been sent over.

**HOLMES:** It might prove helpful to know which is the case.

*BRADSTREET considers, nods, pulls out a pad and makes a note.*

**WATSON:** I assure you, I'd have shown him no affection if I'd run into him alive...with all the commotion he caused. Not to mention the professional embarrassment.

**HOLMES:** Come now, you always appreciate a good performance; you would have been the first to congratulate him. At any rate, the fact that you are a doctor should explain some of the other remarkable circumstance you described last night.

**WATSON:** *(With consternation.)* Well it's still a mystery to me.

**HOLMES:** Well it needn't be, if you'll stop and think!

*Enter LORD D, furious.*

**LORD D:** Now see here! Who is responsible for the ransacking going on in my house?!

**HOLMES:** If you mean who's in charge look to Inspector Bradstreet. If you mean who caused the situation in which we find ourselves this morning...it is that on which we work.

**LORD D:** *(Blusters.)* Now see here—

**BRADSTREET:** Lord Delton, a murder has been done on these premises. It may be inconvenient, Sir, but a man has been killed.

**LORD D:** A thief! When a thief buys it burgling a house, I don't call it murder, I call it justice.

**BRADSTREET:** Oh, well if you're confessing to killing the man, sir, we can suspend the search straight away.

**LORD D:** *(Startled.)* Eh?

**HOLMES:** *(Clears his throat, suppressing a smile.)* Emeralds.

**BRADSTREET:** Oh yes, as Mr. Holmes points out, if you are confessing to killing Bert Gerald and relieving his person of the jewels he had been attempting to relieve from you. And are prepared to tell us what has become—

**LORD D:** Confessing! What are you talking about? I'm confessing to nothing!

**HOLMES:** Well then I suggest you let us get on with finding out who did.

*LORD D looks from HOLMES to BRADSTREET, then gives a pompous grunt and storms upstage. He is stopped by BRADSTREET's call.*

**BRADSTREET:** But do stay handy for questioning...as the need arises.

*LORD D does not turn back. He stiffens, and exits, up. The others regard one another with amusement.*

**HOLMES:** And what do we infer from that, gentlemen?

**DOVE:** The man is an ass?

**HOLMES:** That's more than an inference...in fact it may be a music hall caricature. (*HOLMES looks to BRADSTREET.*)

**BRADSTREET:** That man is lying.

*HOLMES cocks his head and looks to WATSON.*

**WATSON:** And he's blustering for no logical reason.

**HOLMES:** Therefore?

**WATSON:** That man is frightened.

**HOLMES:** Excellent!

**DOVE:** Of what?

**HOLMES:** For that, we need your agent, Christie. So I suggest you head to the Allingham Hotel and hasten him by telephone. Don't take too long. Remember, you and Watson have a meeting at Sayers' Agency.

**DOVE:** (*Warming to the action.*) Right. Back as soon as I can. (*Starts left, hesitates.*) Don't solve it all before I get back.

**HOLMES:** Wouldn't dream of it.

*Exit DOVE*

**WATSON:** What's this about Sayer's Agency? This about the valet?

**HOLMES:** (*Nods.*) We shall deal with that later. Let's now go back to the matter of the importance of your profession in the way events unfolded last night.

**WATSON:** (*Shrugs.*) If you insist.

**HOLMES:** You gave me an accurate description of the approach to the old nursery and the subsequent exchanges?

*WATSON starts to answer, but HOLMES holds up a hand to check him, then calls out.*

Mrs. Cox! (*HOLMES releases WATSON by beckoning with his raised hand.*)

**WATSON:** As near as I can remember, yes. Yes, I'm confident.

**HOLMES:** Well then my dear fellow, you should—

*MRS COX enters, up. HOLMES breaks off.*

Ah, Mrs. Cox. We're ready for you to bring her down, now.

*COX exits. HOLMES turns back to WATSON.*

I'm surprised you haven't mentioned it—

*LADY D appears, up, causing HOLMES to stop again.*

Lady Delton.

**LADY D:** Do you gentlemen have everything you need?

**HOLMES:** Uh...yes, thank you.

**LADY D:** And are you deliberately trying to provoke my husband.

**HOLMES:** (*Feigning shock.*) Lady Delton!

**LADY D:** (*Smiling knowingly.*) That's what I thought. Carry on.

*She turns to go as HOLMES calls.*

**HOLMES:** Lady Delton.

*LADY D looks back.*

**HOLMES:** How long have you known Benton-Payne?

**LADY D:** A few years now.

**HOLMES:** And Mrs. Claypool?

**LADY D:** For most of my life.

**HOLMES:** Thank you.

*LADY D exits.*

**HOLMES:** Bradstreet? (*BRADSTREET grunts.*) Didn't we agree you were to lurk?

**BRADSTREET:** (*Startled.*) Oh...(*BRADSTREET looks about for a place to hide, eventually slipping out the exit, up left.*)

**WATSON:** So this business at Sayers' is vital?

**HOLMES:** It may well prove so.

**WATSON:** Yet you're sending Dove out with me.

**HOLMES:** I have to; I have no intention of leaving this room.

**WATSON:** But—

**HOLMES:** We'll discuss questions for the valet later.

*WATSON protests, but HOLMES shushes him. Enter COX with ROSE. ROSE holds a handkerchief to her eye.*

Thank you, Mrs. Cox.

*Exit COX.*

**WATSON:** Rose. Are you recovered from this morning?

**ROSE:** (*Sniffing.*) Yes, Doctor. (*Looks to the table and hides her eyes.*)  
It was horrible!

*WATSON nods to HOLMES, then to the sofa. HOLMES rolls his eyes.*

**HOLMES:** Would you like to sit down?

**ROSE:** No thank you, sir.

**HOLMES:** Now yesterday, you gave Dr. Watson the impression you had been here some little time, but Mrs. Cox confirms the reality is something like three weeks.

**ROSE:** (*Hesitates, then shrugs.*) Something like.

*HOLMES breaks into an explosive laugh, startling both ROSE and WATSON.*

**HOLMES:** Your tenacity does you credit, but you know this is a case of murder. You came here, three weeks ago as a spy. When certain noises were heard last night, you knew who it was likely to be. And you made sure you were in the search party aimed at the nursery.

**ROSE:** (*Trying a sob.*) No, I—

**HOLMES:** You knew that was where Bert Geraldini was likely to be hiding after gaining access to the house through an upper window. You made sure to engage the doctor in conversation on the way up to give Geraldini advance warning, and you repeated his title so that The Gibbet would know his infamous trick was going to be used on a physician.

**WATSON:** (*Gasps.*) Yes! She did keep saying my name...Dr. Watson. It felt odd but I didn't stop to notice at the time.

**HOLMES:** Of course you didn't because you were confronted with an apparent victim of throttling. Except both Geraldini and Rose knew you could only be fooled during a momentary, cursory glance. And as a doctor and detective, you would surely not be satisfied with a mere glimpse.

**WATSON:** (*Gasping again.*) Oh good god! The screaming. The crashing. And Lady Delton said she launched herself down the stairs at her!

**HOLMES:** All to get you out of the nursery and keep you occupied until Geraldini could spring back to life and find somewhere else to hide.

**ROSE:** I don't know what you're talking about. It was horrible...both times.

**WATSON:** Goodness! I don't know whose was the better job of acting: the corpse or the maiden in distress.

**ROSE:** You what?

**HOLMES:** And you noticed her reaction this morning...before she composed herself and gave us the same hysterics she showed last night. For just a moment we saw someone who had lost a colleague.

**ROSE:** You're beginning to frighten me. I tell you I was scared outta my wits.

*BRADSTREET steps into view, up left.*

**BRADSTREET:** *(Grinning.)* Hello Rosie.

*ROSE turns, sees BRADSTREET, and her posture instantly relaxes.*

**ROSE:** Oh bloody hell! *(Knowing the game is up, ROSE flops onto the sofa.)*

**BRADSTREET:** Lambeth Rose Doyle. When you told me what'd happened I thought it'd be her. She's a good little dipper herself, but her specialty was pitching tantrums and fits for Old Ben Tanks's pickpocket ring.

**ROSE:** Tah very much, Inspector.

**BRADSTREET:** But domestic disguises?

**ROSE:** *(Shrugs.)* It's a funny old business, i'n'it? You do what the shift calls for.

**HOLMES:** And you did a bit of service along the way, I'll wager.

**ROSE:** *(ROSE cocks her head toward HOLMES.)* A bit. Comes in handy.

**BRADSTREET:** Who hired you, Rosie?

**ROSE:** *(Makes a face.)* What'cha mean? The Gibbet hired me, didn't 'e?

**BRADSTREET:** And who hired him? He wouldn't have gone for one piece and he wouldn't have done it in Norwood.

**ROSE:** *(Raising her voice, incredulous at the question.)* I don't know, do I? He used me for the workings of the staff—the routine. The rest of it came from someone else. And that someone did him a mischief!

**HOLMES:** So it wasn't you who killed him?

**ROSE:** Killed him! I didn't think he was still in the house, not after last night...and all the searching. I kept waiting for him to be found in case I had to turn on the waterworks again, but when he wasn't, I thought he was gone, and in a day or two I'd get the word, either to scarp or to get ready for another attempt.

**BRADSTREET:** Makes sense I suppose. Don't mean it's true.

**ROSE:** Look, all I know was that someone hired Bert to steal them emeralds. And Bert hired me to get the stuff on the way things went 'round here, above and below stairs.

**BRADSTREET:** (*To HOLMES.*) What should I do with her? Lock her up straight away?

**ROSE:** Here!

**HOLMES:** I may need her. (*To ROSE.*) I take it that if given a chance you would assist in apprehending the one who did this?

**ROSE:** Well...yeah. It ain't right. Bert...he wasn't my man or anything, but he was good to work with, and he was straight about your cuts.

**HOLMES:** (*HOLMES considers, then nods to BRADSTREET.*) Go back to your room and stay there. We'll spare no one there to guard you, but remember that all the exits to the house are being watched. If we need you we will call. If not, We'll see you get informed who did it.

*ROSE nods, stands and turns to go. She is stopped when HOLMES speaks.*

Oh, and Rose...as you go up to your room...I think sniffles and occasional sobs.

*ROSE smiles, puts her hanky to her nose, and exits blubbing. HOLMES and BRADSTREET watch her, amused.*

**WATSON:** Well I still don't know what to make of it.

**HOLMES:** I admit that the waters are murky. (*Sighs.*) And I very much fear that when we are done filtering them, all we will be left with is the bottom of a tub.

*WATSON and BRADSTREET exchange glances. There is a pause.*

**BRADSTREET:** That Rose is a clever one. And quick.

**WATSON:** You think so? She was blessed convincing, that's all I know.

**BRADSTREET:** Nine out of ten plants like her, if they'd cottoned on at all to what was happening, they have cleared out and left Gerald to his fate...or maybe given him a shout before they tripped you and scrambled for the front door.

**HOLMES:** I concede a level-headedness and resourcefulness one does not often see. Of course she also knew her partner. When Gerald was so careless or unlucky enough to have made that noise, she knew he'd listen to see if he'd been noticed, then go to ground in the method for which he was famous.

**WATSON:** But I still don't see why he didn't flee...or for that matter, where he went.

*HOLMES softly snorts a laugh.*

And I suppose you do?

*HOLMES smiles.*

**WATSON and BRADSTREET:** *(As one, in consternation.)* Holmes!

**HOLMES:** We have a scarcity of direct physical evidence. We must assemble the circumstantial evidence and know more about our suspects and their motive. I am confident I know where the unfortunate Bert escaped your notice, but I want more. When I have it, I'm reasonably certain the accomplice will simply tell us how it was done.

*Enter BUSBY, up left, carrying a large envelope. He is out of breath.*

**WATSON:** Good heavens! Are you back from Sayers' bureau already?

*BUSBY nods.*

**HOLMES:** With good news.

**BUSBY:** They say he's in every day between one and two, and they'll keep him there if he comes in before you get there. (*Looks at the parcel in his hands and gives a start.*) Oh, and on the way back I came to be racing a runner from a Mr. Christie, for Mr. Dove. (*Cocks his head.*) I gave him his tip.

*HOLMES looks to WATSON, who digs out a coin and gives it to BUSBY, who then hands the parcel over to HOLMES.*

**HOLMES:** Now, if you've got your breath, run to Allingham's hotel and tell Dove his agent has been heard from and that things are moving.

*BUSBY runs off. HOLMES opens the envelope and pulls a stack of papers out.*

**BRADSTREET:** I remember that boy. I had him marked down for prison two years ago.

**HOLMES:** (*Reading.*) And now he's marked down for America.

**WATSON:** Ah. Busby mentioned that Dove had made him an offer.

**HOLMES:** Well we must do everything to encourage him.

**WATSON:** He didn't sound very keen. He has a mind to be in your employ, Holmes.

**HOLMES:** I have told him I am not likely to take on an apprentice. Ever.

**WATSON:** But surely you see he regards you as more than an employer.

*HOLMES lowers the papers and fixes WATSON in his gaze.*

**HOLMES:** Bradstreet: is the one man who can claim to know Sherlock Holmes if anyone does in this room right now?

**BRADSTREET:** I believe I'm looking at the gentleman, sir. The one and only.

**HOLMES:** Then Watson, I beg of you to examine what you know—without romanticizing my social qualities—and recognize that I lack in all ways the characteristics of a father, or a mentor, or even a teacher. And when you have admitted it to yourself, you must talk to the boy and make him understand it.

**WATSON:** Does Dove possess the qualities?

**HOLMES:** I'm not qualified to judge. But he has made the offer. He has the means a thousand fold to follow through, and he is—to the last—a man of his word.

*There is a pause. WATSON considers.*

**WATSON:** All right. If it's what you want.

**HOLMES:** *(Draws in a breath of relief.)* Yes. *(Looks at the papers.)*  
Now look at this.

*WATSON and BRADSTREET advance, each taking a sheet of paper. All three read in silence for a moment.*

**BRADSTREET:** Well there's food for thought.

*WATSON nods, then he and BRADSTREET catch each other's gaze and exchange papers, which they read.*

**WATSON:** Well yes...this clarifies motive.

*HOLMES hands him his sheet.*

**HOLMES:** And muddies it up again. It would be different if it only pointed in one direction, but these summaries...

**BRADSTREET:** I see what you mean.

*Enter BUSBY and DOVE, up left.*

**BUSBY:** He was on his way back.

**HOLMES:** Ah Dove! We've intercepted and devoured your private correspondence.

**DOVE:** So I've been hearing. I was just off the telephone with Christie, as it happened. His contact followed up on the first report from the jeweler...which I see you have.

*Pulls out a notebook and hands it to HOLMES.*

And it throws a new light on things.

*HOLMES reads. He recoils with a sublime smile and hands the notebook to WATSON, who shares it with BRADSTREET.*

**WATSON:** Oh no!

**HOLMES:** I told you it was a farce.

**WATSON:** But what does this mean?

**HOLMES:** It means we must put an end to it. Busby: fetch a cab for Watson and Dove. (*HOLMES takes a page from his notebook. And hands it to WATSON. BUSBY exits, up left.*) A few key questions for the valet. You and Dove will no doubt have follow-ups of your own. Ask them by all means. And if you find him reluctant, make sure he understands this is a case of murder. (*WATSON heads off, reading the note. HOLMES once more scribbles a note.*) Inspector, I have a commission for you, as well. Find out if there's been any activity at this bank among our collection of suspects. (*HOLMES hands the note to BRADSTREET, who reads it and smiles.*)

**BRADSTREET:** This should be interesting. (*BRADSTREET tucks the note away and exits jauntily, up left. DOVE regards HOLMES.*)

**DOVE:** Well, that's us, running all over town. What will you be doing?

**HOLMES:** Didn't I say? (*Looks about.*) I will be occupying this room. (*HOLMES flops down on the sofa and puts his feet up.*)

**DOVE:** Are you going to tell me why?

**HOLMES:** I thought you followed all my cases through Watson's accounts.

**DOVE:** Whenever I can.

**HOLMES:** Well in the cab, I suggest you and he discuss the Adventure of the Naval Treaty.

*DOVE fixes a smile, then turns to go.*

**DOVE:** *(To himself.)* The Naval Treaty, indeed.

*Exit DOVE, passing BUSBY, who enters up left.*

**BUSBY:** Cab's waiting sir. *(There is a pause. BUSBY looks about.)*

**HOLMES:** Busby.

**BUSBY:** Sir?

**HOLMES:** In your wild and harrowing childhood among the docks and alleys, did you ever play hide and seek with your fellow urchins.

**BUSBY:** What? As a game like?

**HOLMES:** Yes.

**BUSBY:** I must have done, sure. *(Laughs.)* Made good practice for hiding from the old Bill and the toughs.

**HOLMES:** I'm sure it must. All right. I'm going to close my eyes and count off a minute. You can't leave this room, right?

**BUSBY:** Right.

**HOLMES:** And you're going to find the best hiding place and hide there. Right?

**BUSBY:** Uh...right.

**HOLMES:** Go.

*HOLMES closes his eyes. BUSBY looks about in haste. BLACKOUT.*

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