

SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES

A CASE OF IDENTITY

By SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

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This is the second of the series of 37 Sherlock Holmes stories that will appear every Sunday morning in The Star. The title of the story for next Sunday is: "The Reigate Puzzle."

"My dear fellow," said Sherlock Holmes, as we sat on either side of the fire in his lodgings at Baker street, "life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent. We would not dare to conceive the things which are really mere commonplace of existence. If we could fly out of that window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on, the strange coincidences, the plannings, the cross-purposes, the wonderful chains of events, working through generations, and leading to the most outre results, it would make all fiction with its conventionalities and foreseen conclusions most stale and unprofitable."

"And yet I am not convinced of it," I answered. "The cases which come to light in the papers are, as a rule, bald enough, and vulgar enough. We have in our police reports realism pushed to its extreme limits, and yet the result is, it must be confessed, neither fascinating nor artistic."

"A certain selection and discretion must be used in producing a realistic effect," remarked Holmes. "This is wanting in the police report, where mere stress is laid, perhaps, upon the details, which to an observer contain the vital essence of the whole matter. Depend upon it there is nothing so unnatural as the commonplace."

I smiled and shook my head. "I can quite understand you thinking so," I said. "Of course, in your position of unofficial adviser and helper to everybody who is absolutely puzzled, throughout three continents, you are brought in contact with all that is strange and bizarre. But here—I picked up the morning paper from the ground—'let us put it to a practical test. Here is the first heading upon which I come. 'A husband's cruelty to his wife.' There is half a column of print, but I know without reading it that it is all perfectly familiar to me. There is, of course, the other woman, the drink, the push, the blow, the bruise, the sympathetic sister or landlady. The crudest of writers could invent nothing more crude."

"Indeed, your example is an unfortunate one for your argument," said Holmes, taking the paper and glancing his eye down it. "This is the Dundas separation case, and, as it happens, I was engaged in clearing up some small points in connection with it. The band was a teetotaler, there was no other woman, and the conduct com-

plained of was that he had drifted into the habit of winding up every meal by taking out his false teeth and hurling them at his wife, which, you will allow, is not an action likely to occur to the imagination of the average story-teller. 'Take a pinch of snuff, doctor, and acknowledge that I have scored over you in your example.'

He held out his snuffbox of old gold, with a great amethyst in the center of the lid. Its splendor was in such contrast to his homely ways and simple life that I could not help commenting upon it.

"Ah," said he, "I forgot that I had not seen you for some weeks. It is a little souvenir from the king of Bohemia in return for my assistance in the case of the Irene Adler papers."

"And the ring?" I asked, glancing at a remarkable brilliant which sparkled upon his finger.

"It was from the reigning family of Holland, though the matter in which I served them was of such delicacy that I cannot confide it even to you, who have been good enough to chronicle one or two of my little problems."

"And have you any on hand just now?" I asked, with interest.

"Some ten or twelve, but none which present any feature of interest. They are important, you understand, without being interesting. 'Indeed, I have found that it is usually in unimportant matters that there is a field for the observation, and for the quick analysis of cause and effect which gives the charm to an investigation. The larger crimes are apt to be the simpler, for the bigger the crime, the more obvious, as a rule, is the motive. In these cases, save for one rather intricate matter which has been referred to me from Marseilles, there is nothing which presents any features of interest. It is possible, however, that I may have something better before very many minutes are over, for this is one of my clients, or I am much mistaken."

"He had risen from his chair, and was standing between the parted blinds, gazing down into the dull, neutralized London street. Looking over his shoulder, I saw that on the pavement opposite there stood a large woman in a heavy fur box round her neck, and a large curling red feather in a broad-brimmed hat which was tilted to a coquettish Duchess-of-Devonshire fashion over her ear. From under this great canopy she peeped up in a nervous, hesitating fashion at our windows, while her body oscillated backward and forward, and her fingers fidgeted with her glove buttons. Suddenly, with a plunge, as if the swimmer who leaves the bank, she hurried across the road, and we heard the sharp clang of the bell."

"I have seen those symptoms before," said Holmes, throwing his cigarette into the fire. "Oscillation upon the pavement always means an affair

de coeur. She would like advice, but is for sure. On the matter is not too delicate for communication. And yet even here we may discriminate. When a woman has been seriously wronged by a man she no longer oscillates, and the usual symptom is a broken bell wire. Here we may take it that there is a love matter, but that the maiden is not so much angry as perplexed, or grieved. But here she comes in person to resolve our doubts."

As he spoke there was a tap at the door, and the boy in buttons entered to announce Miss Mary Sutherland, while the lady herself loomed behind his small black figure like a full-sailed merchant-man behind a tiny pilot boat. Sherlock Holmes welcomed her with the easy courtesy for which he was remarkable, and having closed the door, and bowed her into an armchair, he looked her over in the minute, and yet abstracted fashion which was peculiar to him.

"Do you not find," he said "that with your short sight it is a little trying to do so much typewriting?"

"No, sir," she answered, "but now I know where the letters are without looking." Then, suddenly realizing the full purport of his words, she gave a violent start and looked up, with fear and astonishment upon her broad, good-humored face. "You've heard about me, Mr. Holmes," she cried, "how could you know all that?"

"Never mind," said Holmes, laughing. "It is my business to know things. Perhaps I have trained myself to see what others overlook. If not, why should you come to consult me?"

"I came to you, sir, because I heard of you from Mrs. Etherage, whose husband you found so easy when the police and every one had given him up for dead. Oh, Mr. Holmes, I wish you would do as much for me. I'm not rich, but still I have a hundred a year in my own right, besides the little that I make by the machine, and I would give it all to know what has become of Mr. Hosmer Angel."

"Why did you come away to consult me in such a hurry?" asked Sherlock Holmes, with his finger-tips together, and his eyes to the ceiling.

"Mr. Windbank—that is, my father—somewhat vacuous face of Miss Mary Sutherland. 'Yes, I did hang out of the house,' she said, 'for it made me angry to see the easy way in which Mr. Windbank—that is, my father—took it all. He would not go to the police, and he would not go to you, and so at last, as he would do nothing, and kept on saying that there was no harm done, it made me mad, and I just went with my things and came right away to you.'

"Your father," said Holmes, "your step-father, surely, since the name is different."

"Yes, my step-father. I call him father, though it sounds funny, too,

for he is only five years and two months older than myself."

"And your mother is alive?"

"Oh, yes, mother is alive and well. I wasn't best pleased, Mr. Holmes, when she married again so soon after father's death, and a man who was nearly fifteen years younger than herself. Father was a plumber in the Tottenham court road, and he left a tidy business behind him, which mother carried on with Mr. Hardy, the foreman; but when Mr. Windbank came he made her sell the business, for he was very superior, being a traveller in wines. They got 4700 pounds for the good-will and interest, which wasn't near as much as father could have got if he had been alive."

"No," I see. Then at the gasfitters' ball you met, as I understand, a gentleman called Mr. Hosmer Angel."

"Yes, sir. I met him that night, and he called next day to ask if we had got home all safe, and after that he came for walks, but after that father came back again, and Mr. Hosmer Angel could not come to the house any more."

"Well, you know, father didn't like any visitors if he could help it, and he used to say that a woman should be happily in her own family circle. But then, as I used to say to mother, a woman wants her own circle to begin with, and I had not got mine yet."

"But how about Mr. Hosmer Angel? Did he make no attempt to see you?"

"Well, father was going off to France again in a week, and Hosmer wrote and said that it would be safer and better not to see each other until he had gone. We could write in the mean time, and he used to write every day. I took the letters in in the morning, so there was no need for father to know."

"Were you engaged to the gentleman at this time?" asked Mr. Holmes.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Holmes. We were engaged after the first walk that we took. Hosmer—Mr. Angel—was a cashier in an office in Leadenhall street."

"What office?"

"That's the worst of it, Mr. Holmes, I don't know."

"Where did he live, then?"

"He slept on the premises."

"And you don't know his address?"

"No—except that it was Leadenhall street."

"Where did you address your letters, then?"

"To the Leadenhall street postoffice, to be left till called for. He said that if they were sent to the office he would be chaffed by all the other clerks about having letters from a lady, so I offered to typewrite them, like he did his, but he wouldn't have that, for he said that when I wrote them they seemed to come from me, but when they were typewritten he always felt that the machine had come between us. That will just show you how fond he was of me. Mr. Holmes, and the little things that he would think of."

"It was most suggestive," said Holmes. "It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important. Can you remember any other little things about Mr. Hosmer Angel?"

"He was a very shy man, Mr. Holmes. He would rather walk with me in the evening than in the daylight, for he said that he hated to be conspicuous. Very retiring and gentlemanly he was. Even his voice was gentle. He'd had the quincy and swollen glands when he was young, he told me, and it had left him with a weak throat, and a hesitating, whispering fashion of speech. He was always well dressed, very neat and

plain, but his eyes were weak, just as mine are, and he wore tinted glasses against the glare."

"Well, and what happened when Mr. Windbank, your stepfather, returned to France?"

"Mr. Hosmer Angel came to the house again, and proposed that we should marry before father came back. He was in dreadful earnest, and made me swear, with my hands on the Testament, that whatever happened I would always be true to him. Mother said he was quite right to make me swear, and that it was a sign of his passion. Mother was all in his favor from the first, and was even fonder of him than I was. Then, when they talked of marrying within the week, I began to ask about father; but they both said never to mind about father, but just to tell him afterwards, and mother said she would make it all right with him. I didn't quite like that, Mr. Holmes, it seemed funny that I should ask his leave, as he was only a few years older than me; but I didn't want to do anything on the sly, so I wrote to father at Bordeaux, where the company has its French offices, but the letter came back to me on the very morning of the wedding."

"It missed him, then?"

"Yes, sir; for he had started to England just before it arrived."

"Ha! that was unfortunate. Your wedding was arranged, then, for the Friday. Was it to be in church?"

"Yes, sir, but very quietly. It was to be at St. Saviour's near King's Cross, and we were to have breakfast afterwards at the St. Pancras hotel. Hosmer came for us in a hansom, but as there were two of us, he put us both into it, and stepped himself into a four-wheeler, which happened to be the only other cab in the street. We got to the church first, and when the four-wheeler drove up we waited for him to step out, but he never did, and when the cabman got down from the box and looked, there was no one there! The church first, and when the four-wheeler had become of him, for he had seen him get in with his own eyes. That was last Friday, Mr. Holmes, and I have never seen or heard anything since then to throw any light upon what has become of him."

"It seems to me that you have been very shamefully treated," said Holmes.

"Oh, no, sir! He was too good and kind to leave me so. Why, all the morning he was saying to me that whatever happened, I was to be true; and that even if something quite unforeseen occurred to separate us, I was always to remember that I was pledged to him, and that he would claim his pledge sooner or later. It seemed strange talk for a wedding-morning, but what has happened since gives a meaning to it."

"Most certainly it does. Your own opinion is, then, that some unforeseen catastrophe has occurred to him?"

"Yes, sir. I believe that he foresaw some danger, or else he would not have talked so. And then I think that what he foresaw happened."

"But you have no notion as to what it could have been?"

"None."

"One more question. 'How did your mother take the matter?'"

"She was angry, and said that I was

never to speak of the matter again. 'And your father? Did you hear of him?'"

"Yes, and he seemed to think me that something had happened. As he said, 'I should have heard of Hosmer Angel, what interest you would have in bringing me to the door of the church, and then leaving me? Now, if he had borrowed my money, he would have settled on him, and some reason; but Hosmer was a dependent about money, and would look at a shilling of mine yet, what could have happened to him? He would not write or sleep a wink at night.' She began to sob heavily into it."

"I shall glance into the case for you, Mr. Holmes, rising; 'and I have doubt that we shall reach some result. Let the weight of the rest upon me now, and do not let me mind dwell upon it further. As I try to let Mr. Hosmer Angel's mind dwell upon his memory, as he has from your life.'

"Then you don't think I'll see again?"

"I fear not."

"Then what has happened to her?"

"You will leave that question to her. I should like an accurate description of him, and any letters which you can spare."

"I advertised for him in last day's Chronicle," said she. "Here slip, and here are four letters."

"Thank you. And your address?"

"No. 31 Lyon Place, Camberwell. I understand. Where is your place of business?"

"He travels for Westhouse & bank, the great claret importers, Fenchurch street."

"Thank you. You have made a statement very clearly. You will find the papers here, and remember the vice which I have given you. I whole incident be a sealed book do not allow it to affect your life. 'You are very kind, Mr. Holmes. I cannot do that. I shall be true to Hosmer. He shall find me ready if he comes back.'

"For all the preposterous hat a vacuous face, there was something in the simple faith of our little bundle of papers upon the table, and went her way, with a lisp to come again whenever she was summoned."

Sherlock Holmes sat silent for minutes with his finger-tips still ed together, his legs stretched out, and his gaze directed toward the ceiling. Then he came down from the rack the old clay pipe, which was to him as a seal, and, having lit it, he backed in his chair, with the cloud-wreaths spinning up from and a look of infinite languor upon his face.

"Quite an interesting study, maiden," he observed. "I found more interesting than her little lem, which, by the way, is a trite one. You will find parallel if you consult my index, in Ar-

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planned of was that he had drifted into the habit of winding up every meal by taking out his false teeth and hurling them at his wife, which, you will allow, is not an action likely to occur to the imagination of the average story-teller. 'Take a pinch of snuff, doctor, and acknowledge that I have scored over you in your example.'

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HELPS AND NEEDS HELP

Wilmington's Greatest Charity, James Walker Memorial Hospital

For the first time in its twenty years of service the James Walker Memorial Hospital is coming before the public with a general appeal for funds.

The burden of the management of the hospital has been carried, in all these years, by a very small group of citizens who, at the sacrifice of time and money, have served without remuneration.

While this service has been ungrudgingly rendered in the past, and will continue in the future, there has been a growing conviction that the maintenance of a high standard of efficiency must hereafter depend to a great extent upon the measure of support given by the citizens at large to their hospital.

The hospital faces a deficit of approximately \$30,000 and this must be liquidated. This deficit is due solely to necessary permanent improvements and repairs which have been made in the past five or six years. There is no deficit in the current operating account.

The hospital must have more room for medical and surgical cases. This can be secured by moving the nurses' quarters from the hospital building, and building a nurses' home. This is an urgent need and the cost will approximate \$70,000.

The nurses' home will be known as the A. D. McClure Nurses' Home to honor the memory of one of Wilmington's former universally loved citizens.

Beginning on the evening of Tuesday, February 15, and continuing for five days, ending Monday, February 21, a committee of 120 volunteer workers will call upon the public for their contributions toward the \$100,000 needed to carry out the plans.

Wilmington has ever been sensitive to appeals for worthy causes and jealous of her position as a progressive and responsible community.

We shall not falter in meeting the needs of our own hospital.

DO YOU KNOW

That through the will of the late James Walker the main hospital building was erected and presented to the people of Wilmington and surrounding communities?

That through the beneficence of Mr. W. H. Sprunt, the late Mr. Samuel Bear, Dr. James Sprunt and the late Mrs. James Sprunt and Mrs. George R. French, a number of other buildings have been added to the original building?

That a leading contractor recently estimated the present value of the several buildings at \$349,303.09, which together with the value of the equipment indicates that the people of Wilmington and surrounding communities have at their service a plant representing a value of \$397,684.30?

That all this has been done for the people without calling upon them for financial aid?

YOU WILL AGREE, THEREFORE—

That the management is fully justified in this present emergency in asking that the people should, for the First Time, rally to the financial support of their own Hospital.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS:

	1919.	1920.
Patients admitted	2,734	2,885
Days treatments, pay patients	16,062	13,121
Charity patients	8,627	14,907
Surgical operations	1,794	1,801
Dressings	1,312	6,988
Ambulance calls	1,128	1,191
Meals served	187,028	198,397
Average cost per meal25	.27
Milk feedings	6,695	6,508
Operating costs	\$94,934.90	\$118,694.27
Operating cost per day	3.85	4.23

53½ per cent of days' treatments was for charity patients

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Campaign for \$100,000 February 15-21

Headquarters: Home Savings Bank Building

