



Sherlock Holmes - His Last Bow (Illustrated)

Arthur Conan Doyle

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I love detective mysteries! One of my favorite modern authors, Tony Hillerman, has characters that in some ways reflect Holmes' penchant for deciding what to do with the guilty when he catches him. Sometimes he finds that justice is best served in letting the guilty go free. Doyle's Sherlock Holmes character has spawned many movies, and many imitators. Doyle's works are classic.

Below are a brief description of the cases in this volume. I try not to offer any spoilers here, because the conclusion is never best revealed before you start.

"The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge"

Holmes works together with a police detective, showing that he appreciates a fine mind and good detective work, and doesn't mind that the policeman has some successes. Holmes and the detective solve portions of the case independently and together.

"The Adventure of the Carboard Box"

A single woman receives a box with some assorted objects in it, along with a man's and woman's ear. The police arrest the man, and he is tormented by his acts of murder. Holmes' epligue statement seems unsatisfying.

"The Adventure of the Red Circle"

A woman takes on a mysterious boarder/man for a fortnight (2 weeks), who pays handsomely and has a peculiar need for privacy. The woman's husband is kidnapped and then released an hour later. Holmes discovers that the boarder is a woman! Apparently a switch occurred when the man rented the room, and a woman was stashed there for her protection. The end is satisfying.

"The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans"

Holmes is quite bored with no case save petty thefts in the paper and no clients beckoning him. He gets an unusual telegram from his brother Mycroft, an agent for the British government. His brother enlists his aid to solve the theft of some very sensitive government papers which have been stolen, and the thief has mysteriously been killed. Three of the ten papers, the most important ones, are stolen and missing from the dead man's pocket. Holmes served his country admirably and solved the case.

"The Adventure of the Dying Detective"

Holmes has an enemy who is well studied on infectious diseases of the orient. Holmes' landlady calls Dr. Watson and begs him to come see the dying detective. Holmes begs him to go to his enemy, who has extensive knowledge of the disease he is being afflicted with, to help him. Very, very good ending.

"Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax"

Lady Frances Carfax had disappeared. She was seen in the company of a couple of notable swindlers posing as missionaries. Holmes sends Watson to Paris to investigate, then they resume the investigation together in London. An unusual case indeed!

"The Adventure of the Devil's Foot"

Holmes' health had declined from excessive work, and his physician (not Dr. Watson) prescribed nothing but

rest. The two go off to a quiet place to lodge and for Holmes to regain his health. What happens then is that they stumble upon the most extraordinary case ever! A man leaves a card game with his brother and sister, and goes home. Shortly after he leaves, the sister dies in her chair, face with a mask of horror on it, and both brothers are found in their card seats, babbling mad in the morning. Holmes takes the case, then finds the last brother is found dead, the same as his sister was. The murderer meets the same fate as the woman. Holmes attitude is that justice was done, maybe not law, but justice.

"His Last Bow"

Dr. Watson has not seen Holmes for some years now since his retirement. A certain German spy has just arranged for the security communication naval codes of the British government. But, the spy is not a cleaver as he thinks he is. Holmes and Watson reunite one last time as Holmes reveals one thing that can draw him out of retirement.

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