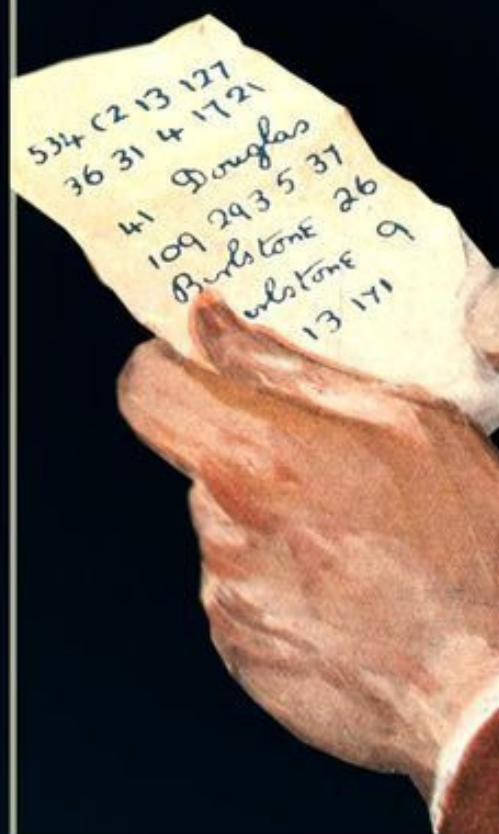


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Vadim Deruzhinsky

SHERLOCK HOLMES ENIGMAS



Vadim Deruzhinsky
Sherlock Holmes Enigmas

«Издательские решения»

Deruzhinsky V.

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This is an unusual book about Sherlock Holmes. It consists of 24 unique stories of Holmes' investigation. The reader is available to test oneself in deduction: each story has two parts — the first part has facts, the second one has an answer. Please do not be in a hurry to read the answer, but try to rack your brain, as Sherlock used to say, to figure it out by your own...

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Содержание

SHERLOCK HOLMES ENIGMAS	6
1. Sherlock Holmes' Moon	7
2. Eye of the Dead Man	10
3. Mystery Murders	13
4. Major Brown's Nightmare	16
5. Incident in the Museum	18
6. The Flowering of the Strange Orchid	22
7. White Bird	25
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	26

Sherlock Holmes Enigmas

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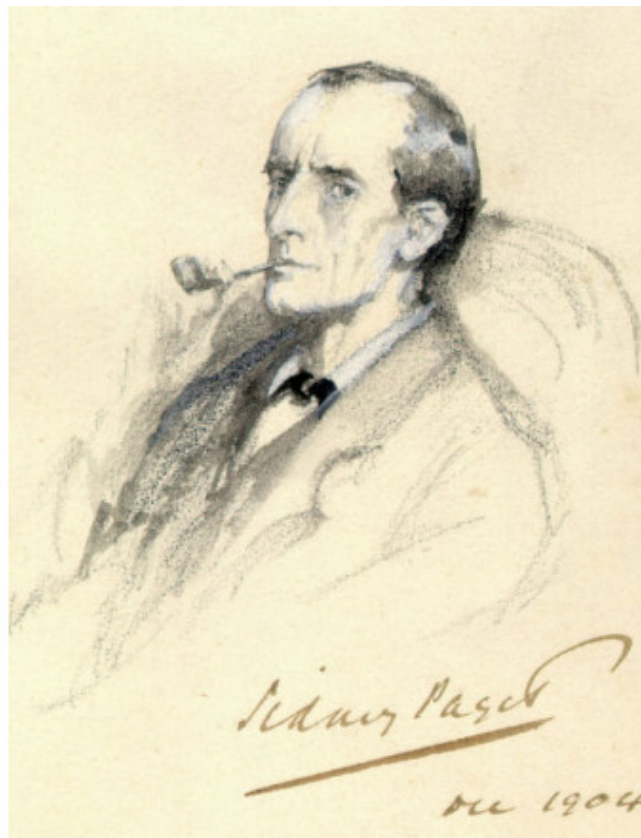
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Vadim Deruzhinsky
(based on Dr. Watson writings)

Translation: Michael Goldencov

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Illustrations by Sidney Edward Paget, Arthur Conan Doyle's friend. On the cover: Illustration of Sherlock Holmes for "The Valley of Fear". From The Strand Magazine, September, 1914.



Sherlock Holmes

"Looking through my records I often find cases in which Holmes brilliantly guessed different enigmas, which I could never do. Using his own deduction method Holmes easily could find out an answer that always at the beginning made me think he was kidding, joking at me. But as soon as he explained it to me, I felt confusion cause had not found out it by myself, had not seen the evident things!

Now I recommend some such cases of Holmes' brilliant deduction. I invite readers to test their own brains and deduction, to guess some mystery enigmas as Holmes could do."

Dr. J. Watson

1. Sherlock Holmes' Moon



“Here is a dead man,” said inspector Lestrade to Holmes and me, as we were getting down to the river. July night was clear, the full moon was shining deadly in the cloudless sky, getting its mercury ghost light to the landscape. A mist smoked over the river, spreading on the wet banks that made an illusion of broader water stream. At the water there were two policemen and a police doctor, awaiting for us. A body of the drowned man was near their feet.

Frankly speaking we altogether with Lestrade came to Leeds town for another reason – we were providing with an investigation of the Bank Of New York company’s black deal.

Police inspector Sherman had met us at the station and said about just founded a drowned man. Although it was urgent case Lestrade made us go to the place – he was always sure the police was helpless without his assistance.

“Aha!” Lestrade crouched over the body, turned his head covering his nose by the palm. “Shit! The smell is hard. For how long is the body here in the water?”

“About two weeks,” answered the police doctor. “Pretty long.”

I was standing in the distance, Holmes stood near Lestrade, looking down at the body in the light of kerosene lamps of the policemen.

“Yes, two weeks,” said Holmes. “Could you light the face once again? Well, thank you... What do you think of that?” Holmes turned to the police doctor, pointing out to the wounded head of the drowned man.

“This? It was hit by some hard object. A rock for sure. This hit for sure was a fatal. Then they did push the body in the river.”

“I got it too,” nodded Lestrade. “I feel by my nose such cases.”

Lestrade was saying this covering his nose and moving back of the body.

Out of the Lestrade’s back I saw the body in the grass. It was a man of about 40, in the unbuttoned jacket, all wet an in the river mud, in dark trousers and former white shirt. Now the shirt was the same color as his face – dirty-grey. This scene was awful, I turned away.

Inspector Sherman walked down to us from the road.

“The case is getting a little bit clear,” said the inspector. “I was told the dead man is probably Edward Kelvin, an engineer of textile factory in Leeds. He has disappeared two weeks ago. His family informed us about it, but we could not help. Kelvin had gone to London where he was selling his hereditary house. He had to be back with money just two weeks ago. They saw him leaving London for Leeds. They saw him in Leeds railway station, getting off the train. Then he vanished. And now... here he is!”

“Did you examine the body?” asked Holmes.

“For sure,” answered Sherman. “We did find no any money although a big sum had to be. His pockets are empty, turned upside, nothing at all. I think they killed him because of the money.”

“Wish I had found this bastard!” Lestrade’s voice sounded. “I would... I would...”

“Please give light over here!” Holmes addressed to the policeman.

Kerosene light spotted left hand of the dead man. Fingers were clenched. Holmes squatted down trying to unclench fingers.

“What is it?” asked Sherman surprisingly.

“Some mud,” echoed Lestrade.

Staying around we watched at wet grass in the body’s hand.

“That is not river mud,” said Holmes. “Kelvin turned out to be in the water after the death.”

“Well,” shrugged his shoulders Lestrade. “Then what is it?”

Using pincers Holmes took a wet piece of grass, looked at this closer. By his other hand Holmes got out a magnifier to examine the grass.

“This is clover.”

Holmes returned the piece of grass back to the hand of the body, put magnifier and pincers in his pocket and turned to the inspector.

“Now, let’s remember where is a clover field near by?”

Sherman fell to thinking. He said: “Nowhere. There are no such places. But one...”

The only clover place was one mile from us, up to the river...

“That is the very place,” said Holmes as we turned out in the clover meadow in 30 minutes later. “Kelvin was killed, robbed and push into the river. Who lives there?” He pointed out to the only house near by. Sherman asked the same question to the local policeman.

The answer was:

“This is Michael Porter house. He runs local consumer goods shops. His business goes not well, he is almost ruined. This house is already for sale.”

“Porter... This name is familiar to me,” murmured Sherman. “Got it! Porter is the only witness! The man who was in the same train with Kelvin while coming back to Leeds! Wonderful!”

“Come on to talk to him”, Lestrade advised. “I feel by my nose he is in the deal.”

“Is it good?” asked I. “Deep night. One o’clock AM...”

But Lestrade and Sherman laughed.

“Just at night time the predator catches its game, my friend!” Lestrade said solemnly and clapped my shoulder. “People can’t lie right after sleeping.”

* * *

But Mr. Porter looked calm. He said:

“Well, I was in the train room with your Kelvin. I’ve never seen him before. As for his big money, I can’t say anything about that. It seems to me he was saying something about his house purchase in London... Well, I was listening to him not attentively. In Leeds we dropped in some café near my house. Just for a little. Then I went my way, he went his own one.”

“We have an information that Mr. Kelvin was killed near your house, Lestrade said rather roughly. “Could you remember something unusual took place two weeks ago?”

“What?” Porter got surprised. He looked a bit confused now. Then he looked at the window where the full moon was shining brightly the clover meadow along the bank.

“Well! I remember!” said he gladly. “Two weeks ago it didn’t look too much unusual, but now, when you said about murder... I was just entering the house as saw in the window a stranger.”

“Stranger?” asked Lestrade. “Why stranger?”

“He looked as a typical London’s dandy, not as a regular local man. He was in a blue cloak, light-grey hat, brown fashionable costume and horn-rimmed spectacles. Now I guess it was the same place to where Kelvin had gone. That man in blue was holding some package. And he looked back. Now I’m sure he was a killer!”

“Are you really sure about all these details you told us about this dandy?” asked Holmes.

“Yes, it was full moon, pretty light, and I remembered this man rather well”.

As the interview was over Lestrade and Sherman walked away in the yard together with us to discuss this information.

“What we are going to do, gentlemen?” asked Sherman. “What are your ideas?”

“I feel we have found the trace!” Lestrade hit by his fist his palm. “We need to search this man in blue cloak. In London! Unfortunately, our victim was not good in choosing clients for his buying. Porter looked rather honest. I feel he is saying the truth.”

Holmes smiled. He rocked his head.

“Gentlemen, this Porter tried to fool us. But he failed. Though some one believed him.”

“How did on Earth he fooled me?” Lestrade raised his eyebrows. He looked hurt and angry with Holmes’ words. The rest looked at Holmes with interest.

ANSWER:

“Please, look up,” answered Holmes. “You see the full moon. Porter is not good in astronomy. He could not see the full moon two weeks ago. It was the new moon there. Remind you, my friends, the full Moon happens regularly in 30 nights, but as for two weeks ago – it was the new moon, when we can’t even see the moon in the sky – it is too close to the sun and perfectly invisible. That’s why it is always dark, that’s why Porter could not see any color of the running man cloth. Light-grey, blue or red – all the colors are the same – black in such a darkness!”

“You are right!” Lestrade’s face lit. “I was thinking just about the same. Well, what we are waiting for?” And he turned to Sherman: “Come and get this bastard...”

When the policemen leading by Sherman came back to Porter, Lestrade with a happy shining face turned to us and said: “Sorry, gentlemen, local police is so stupid!..”

In the end I should add that this Porter turned out to be a real murderer of Kelvin.

2. Eye of the Dead Man



It was winter evening of 1896. Holmes and me just finished a dinner and were talking lazily at our Baker Street place, as Mrs. Hudson entered the room.

“Mr. Holmes, here is a message from inspector Lestrade.”

“Interesting,” answered my friend. “Please give it to me...”

He opened a piece of paper and read aloud:

“Dear Mr. Holmes,

We have a problem case in which You can help us with Your deduction method. If You are not against I will remind You our last week discussion where You has said that are able to resolve any case if take part in research from very beginning. We bet for 50 pounds. Although in case You regret about this bet I will accept Your apologize with pleasure. But only together with agreement that Your method is not perfect. If you persist so I wait for You right now at Thornford Road 6, where a murder took place an hour before.

Sincerely Yours

Inspector Lestrade

PS. Please don't forget to have 50 pounds.”

“Ha-ha!” laughed Holmes. “Well, Watson, we accept this?”

“Without any doubts!” cried out I.

Lestrade met us at Thorford Road.

“Very nice of you, Mr. Holmes!” he was really glad to see us. “You are gambler, Mr. Holmes!” And he jokily shook his finger.

As we were walking to the house, the inspector briefly described the whole situation:

“Andrew Raffit is killed. Well-known industrial boss. Motive is clear: The brilliant Unona is stolen, the brilliant he has bought. Mr. Raffit used to watch it every night in his cabinet. Every evening, about an hour. Frankly speaking I don't understand such a foolish thing! This night, when Raffit was watching his brilliant once again, two persons were in the house: his servant Pries and a secretary Adams. Some one from them killed Raffit. No one else was able do that. As I understand it Raffit was sitting in his cabinet with his back to the door. A killer came from his back side and hit him by a dirk into the top of his head. And he took the brilliant, but could not go away too far. Well, we have

spoiled the killer's plan, by chance. Our policeman pushed by chance the crystal vase of flowers and the brilliant rolled out onto the carpet. Oh, the bastard is a cunning guy! He didn't take the brilliant, but put it in into the water – Unona was invisible there. This murderer was planning to return back without any risk, after the mess would be over. But it didn't come off.”

Lestrade looked very satisfied, he was shinning as a clean jar. I even thought that he had known the real murderer and just wanted to test Holmes.

He continued: “So, we have got the brilliant! As soon as Pries saw it he broke in tears and told us that he and Adams had planned to steal Unona, but not to kill Mr. Raffit. He blamed Adams. Adams confessed too, but he blamed Pries. So we have two suspects! Kitchen maiden saw each of them entering the cabinet. First Pries entered to give Raffit evening mail. In 20 minutes Adams entered, he then said to the servant to turn out the light in the cabinet in 10 minutes, as Mr. Raffit had asked. Raffit used to watch his brilliant in twilight.

Adams is sure that he left Raffit in good condition, alive and health. Pries turned out upper light in the cabinet. The turner unit was out and Pries did not enter the room. Finally, in 20 minutes the maiden came to bring the tea. She found her host dead. Mr. Raffit was still sitting in his armchair, looking straight, but the marine knife was in his head.

The question is – who is a liar? Or Adams murdered Raffit, or Pries did it later... Can you, Mr. Holmes, demonstrate your deduction method now?”

Lestrade victoriously looked at Holmes. He said: “While we are having the main motive – the brilliant – and only two suspects, I want to make our bet a little more difficult. You should figure out the killer in 30 minutes. Do you agree?”

“Thirty minutes?” racked his head Holmes. “This is absurd.”

Smile lit Lestrade's face.

“So, Mr. Holmes! The bet is not acceptable for you?”

“Absolutely! Not acceptable! As for me, one minute will be enough!”

Holmes made a sign to switch the light on, slightly push away shocked Lestrade and came across the room to the table. He stood before dead Raffit, bowed and began to watch his glass-like eyes.

“What are you doing?” Lestrade was really knocked out by Holmes' manipulations.

“I look at his eyes,” Holmes murmured in answer. In some seconds he turned to the inspector with a smile on his lips. “So, my dear, where is my money? 50 pounds. I have won the bet!”

“What?..” Lestrade was confused. “Why? You know who is a murderer?”

“Yes, I do. I have seen the killer in the eyes of the dead”, Holmes said still smiling and got out his pipe.

Lestrade was standing still confused. Then he laughed, shaking his finger:

“Ha-ha! I know what you mean! You mean this foolish fairytale about the eye of the victim makes a picture of the killer! This is a bull shit!”

“Picture of the killer on the eye cornea? Yes, it's all foolish fantasy,” nodded Holmes. “You are right! Even though should this miracle be a real one you would never see the killer cause the victim didn't see him. Raffit sat with his back to him,” Holmes smoked his pipe. “I mean different. Watch the eyes of Raffit! And you will read the name of the killer in them!”

Lestrade suspiciously looked at Holmes. He came to Raffit and was staring at his eyes for a while.

“Nothing at all is written on them,” said he finally.

“Well, this is what my deduction method is!” Holmes kept on smoking. “I just see what you do not see...”

I also had a look at dead eyes of the businessman, but did not see anything. At some moment it seemed to me there was a mist image of some head in the big pupil of the dead eye. Some forehead, some awful ugly face, short cut hair... I felt a chill and turned away.

ANSWER:

And here is an explanation that Holmes has told us:

“There is no any image in the eye-pupil of the dead person! It is a medical fact! But I mean something different! The main moment of our case is that Adams entered the room when it was light there. As for Pries, he came in there when the light was over. What does indicate the moment of the murder? Only one object can indicate this moment. This object is an eye-pupil. Raffit was killed quickly and his death came fast because of quick strike in his brain by sharp object, and his pupils remained the same as they were at the moment of the death. They remain big as they could be in the dark room. If the pupils are small – it means that the murder happens in the light room. But his pupils are big. When I saw it I understood that the murderer is Pries, the servant, who entered in the dark cabinet and decided not to share the price of the brilliant with his partner. He took Adams’ dirk and killed the businessman as if it Adams did it. That’s all, my dear Inspector. So I earned my money in the honest battle.”

Lestrade had a morose look. He was standing looking down at his nails, keeping silence... As it turned out later he was sure the killer was Adams just because of the dirk, which belonged to him.

When we left the house Holmes smiled and did push me in the side:

“Study, Watson, to earn easy money. I have made 50 pounds for just one minute of work!”

3. Mystery Murders



“You know, dear Mr Holmes, very strange, mystery murders take place sometimes,” said inspector Lestrade. His voice sounded seriously. It looked like he knew what he was talking about. Holmes and me altogether with Lestrade were sitting before the fireplace at our Baker Street apartment. There was raining outside, but inside we were having a nice “weather” of our cozy dark room along with sipping warm brandy.

Holmes was smoking his pipe and looking at the fire asked:

“As far as I understand you are talking about MYSTERY murders?”

“Right,” answered Lestrade. “In my practice I have some cases which could not be explained by regular way. Only by mystery.”

“Very interesting,” said Holmes. “And what cases do you mean?”

“For example there is one strange case that took place over here at Baker Street long before you moved here. About 25 years ago.”

Lestrade paused for awhile and then continued:

“Just imagine, my dear friends, some gentleman got out of home at 13th day of the month and a brick hit his head. Foolish death! Rare one! But in a month, back again at 13th day, another man was killed by the same way! What do you think about such wonderful cases?”

“It’s unbelievable!” said I. “This is a tragic coincidence, or...” I confused and did not finish my thought.

“Or it is fantasy,” Holmes finished for me. “Isn’t it, my dear Inspector?”

“Of course not! You may find the details of these cases in old papers in the library. Various papers wrote about that. And I researched both of these cases.”

“Really?” Holmes turned to Lestrade. “And what was the final report?”

“Actually... There was no any report. Every one took it as force major, coincidence. Tragedy cases without any human participation.”

“If it is not so hard for you, my friend, could you tell us about that a bit more?” asked Holmes.

“Well, for sure. Some Walter Thomson was first who died. He worked in the Geographic Society magazine. His body was found in some hours. And a brick near by. As we discovered there were construction works on the roof of the house No 169. By the night all the bricks were packed in the set, but it was raining and the water broke the set of bricks. One brick did slide to the edge of the roof, fell down and hit the head of this Thomson. As I said the date of the day was 13th. They said the weird power was involved – the house is on the former place of executions.

But the official report was taken as a tragic natural reason. In one month, at the 13th day too, it was raining again. Retired colonel Chasey left the house for the club. His wife Rosa was seeing him off, she was right at the doorway when thunder and the lightning took place.

As she said the lightning did strike the same bricks set on the roof and one brick flied up then down and hit Chasey. This hit was so strong that his end of glasses, a metal end, cut his skull over the ear. Like a knife into the butter.

This case caused a real panic. They said it happened because of that damned house. The papers wrote something about mystery nature of the both cases. Even I thought about mystic source of that damn cases. The lightning can do like that. My aunty had seen lightning hit the pole, and a big piece of the pole was thrown out for hundred yards. So the lightning killed the colonel. But the lightning can't be arrested.”

Lestrade silenced. We all kept silence for a while. Fire light was dancing on the floor, rain was dropping to the window... I was thinking about all this mystic that had taken place over here. I pictured myself all these awful murders in such raining days... I shivered. It was Holmes' cold voice that broke the silence.

“You are right, Lestrade, the lightning cannot be arrested. But a real killer must be caught. Although he is free.”

“I don't understand,” the inspector lifted his brows. “You want to say...”

“Yes, Mr. Lestrade. Colonel Chasey was murdered by a human. Without any mystic. This damned mystic spoiled all the deal. How can't you see? There are three good items that one must not ignore. Think it over!”

ANSWER:

“First,” said Holmes coldly. “A young Chasey's wife could not see from the doorway the lightning hit the roof. She didn't see the moment of lightning struck the bricks. She could not and she did not see the brick falling down to the head of Chasey. This is a fiction.

The lightning can't hit the bricks on the roof at all. According to the law all houses of London have lightning rods. Ball lightning, you may say? Well, but how could the brick hit the glasses over the ear? So the struck was done not on the top of the head but at the back of it, near the ear! It is clear that Chasey was turning back – as he heard the noise behind him – at the moment some one hit his head by the brick. By the way, what about his wife?”

“Nothing wrong,” Lestrade shrugged his shoulders. “She married back again, she had got a good legacy... H-m... I didn't ever think of her...”

“You are thick as a brick, my dear friend, cause you had ignored all of that! The young woman and her lover did it! They took as a good idea that previous mystic case and organized this murder!” Holmes looked at Lestrade ironically:

“The most mystic case for me it is you, my dear Inspector, as our brave police which is so thick as a brick too! The brick, that had fallen down from the roof.”

4. Major Brown's Nightmare



It happened so that Sherlock Holmes and me got to some boarding-house of Scotland at 1896. This is a usual place for old couples to have a rest. It took us several days to stay there, but we had some strange case over there.

We did rent two rooms on the first floor. A retired major Brown just from India and his medicine doctor Adams lived the next door. Because of constant nightmares Adams recommended Brown to have a rest at some cozy place. There, in Scottish boarding-house Brown was getting better.

Once in the morning loud voices made me get up. I got my dressing-gown on and left the room. I saw Holmes, he looked worried.

“What the hell, Watson?” asked Holmes me. “They did not let me watch my good dream.”

“Something happened in Brown’s room,” I answered.

“The very guy that came from India with his nightmares? He saw something bad again?”

The lady-host Mrs. Carry appeared right at this moment. She was pale.

“Oh, my God! Death!” cried out she. “In my boarding-house! Oh my God!”

“Mrs. Carry!” Holmes did not look sleepy any more. “What is going on?”

“Gosh!” cried out the woman again. “You don’t know yet? Major Brown! Poor Brown! He is dead! Because of nightmare!”

Me and Holmes looked at each other. This news was very strange.

In the room we saw doctor Adams, a nervous man in round glasses and small beard, and dead Mr. Brown, who lied in the bed with a grimace of terror on his face.

Holmes got closer to the bed, touched the Brown's hand. The major was really dead.

"What's happened?" he asked, turning to Adams.

"Brown was sick," the doctor began to explain, gathering his instruments into his bag. "A month ago he addressed to recover a very strange illness. Some Indian wizard cursed him. The wizard whispered that Brown would die while sleeping because of the awful dream. When Brown returned back from India he began to suffer from nightmares, he had seen the wizard who moved out from the darkness and stretched his long – about several feet – hands to him. And then Brown awaked."

"Well," said Holmes, looking at the dead face of Brown. "They say it is mystic. But I would better to say of hypnotizing. Well, please continue."

"There is nothing to continue," answered Adams. "We have come to this house, nightmare disappeared... But some days ago these awful dreams came back. Last morning Brown told me about another nightmare. Indian temple. Snakes on the walls, poison green smoke out of the windows... And an awful voice of the wizard... Then this damned old man came out to the major and caught his throat by his curling nails... Brown then could not sleep until the light.

Afternoon I made Brown to sleep for an hour upon my control. He slept not well. The wizard came again, but that time he appeared from the great hole of the black tree. He stretched his fingers to him. Each finger was a scorpion.

Brown shouted and got up. He was in cold sweat. Last night the wizard looked like dead man with worms on his face, with empty eyes holes, and a big knife in the hand. He said "I came to murder you'."

Adams stopped his tale, a policeman and a police doctor came in. Then Adams continued:

"This is simple and dramatic circumstances that took place. In the moment I slightly touched his neck by two fingers to test his pulse Brown saw the wizard in the shape of a great snake hitting his neck by two teeth as. And his heart did not stand it. A sheer heart attack happened. His face turned red, he opened his eyes and tried to get up from the bed, but fell down... I called Mrs. Carry. We tried to recover Brown, but useless. The wizard said he would die. Alas! That happened..."

Suddenly Holmes loudly said:

"But Sherlock Holmes from London is saying that you are liar and would be arrested. Constable! Arrest this man!"

I was puzzled. Holmes again saw something that I did not. What?

ANSWER:

"My friend! It is so easy!" Holmes laughed, getting out his pipe.

"Please don't! I want to know what have you got this time! Adams looks a good man! How did you see that he was telling not truth?"

Holmes smiled.

"It's so easy! How could Adams know what did Brown see before his death? May be he is not a killer, but he is a liar at least... Darkness!" Holmes knocked his forehead and turned back to me. "This his word sounded strange also..."

In two weeks, in London, we received the letter from Scotland Yard. The Scottish police thanked us for the help. They informed that Adams was hunting for rich men's priorities. He was not a medicine doctor at all! Adams decided to fool Brown using his specific psycho disease. This bastard gave to former major hallucination pills which caused nightmares. Then he poisoned Brown. If not Holmes Adams could fool Scotland Yard as well. Frankly speaking, as Holmes said to me secretly, in this case he was risking. The story about the last nightmare any doctor could just propose as a version. But Holmes' deduction did not let him down.

5. Incident in the Museum



“In works of art, frankly speaking, I’m attracted to not their artistic merits. I’m attracted to their criminal history. I look at them as a subject around which con artists and thieves always commit their crimes. Agree, it is not less interesting aspect of the artwork, you may say, its second life and the second story. Now, Watson, can you tell me about this pretty thing?”

Holmes pointed at a golden medallion with a large diamond hanging behind glass on the Museum wall... We were spending that evening at London’s Museum of Fine Arts as according to inspector Lestrade’s information, in the night there was supposed to be a robbery over there. The police knew that a robbery will certainly happen this night (agent Lestrade heard about this at the meeting in the thieves’ environment), but no one knew exactly who would be a robber. The inspector did not rule out that it may be a good skilled recidivist, that’s why he invited to the Museum Holmes, who knew with photographic accuracy the faces of hundreds of dangerous criminals.

“Oh, this is the famous locket Messalina!” I exclaimed. “In 1701 it was made by the Italian master Casacci. Then it belonged to the Pope, then uh... someone else. And was donated to the Museum by Lord Verrington.”

I expected that my extensive knowledge will make an impression on Holmes. But Holmes looked disappointed.

“You see, my friend,” sadly he said. “It turns out you know nothing. This medallion was stolen 27 times, 8 times they sold its fake copy, eleven people were killed in the struggle for the possession of it, three of them were strangled, one drowned, four poisoned, two stabbed and one was killed

by a fireplace stick. I can tell you all the details of each case. That's what I name by a phrase 'to know something about things'..."

I didn't have time to answer Holmes because suddenly out of the dark halls of the long Museum corridors a police whistle sounded and a woman screaming for help. It was certainly one of the Museum caretaker who called the police: all of caretakers had police whistles to signal in urgent cases.

"Quick, Watson!" cried out Holmes. "The robbery occurred!"

I hurried up after him...

A woman of about forty-five, the curator of the Museum, looked worried and confused. A green lantern shining from the street through the assembled from colored glass window painted the woman's face scared to death. But I thought it was just an illusion. Holmes, inspector Lestrade, me and two policemen listened to the story of the woman.

"I, as Mr. Inspector ordered, was walking from room to room, trying to notice strange and not to frighten anybody who intends to commit theft. I was over there," she pointed across the corridor to the far room, "when I noticed HIM. He was in this room and very suspiciously stood over by the Faberge eggs table. Then I slowly looked out of the corner... looked carefully... And saw that the glass table is broken, and this man is trying to get the egg. Then I got scared, grabbed a whistle and began to whistle as crazy!"

"Where is this?.." began to ask Lestrade.

"Here it is!" a woman solemnly showed the whistle.

"Not a whistle! A robber!"

"Ran to the exit. He took nothing!"

The inspector sighed in relief.

"Well, we'll catch him finally. We've got him already. All the ways are blocked by the police, he will not go far."

And he turned to a constable, ordered to detain all the men located at the Museum and bring them here.

"Now we'll figure him out!" Lestrade joyfully rubbed the palms. "Well, let's tell me what he looked like?"

"I can't say that," the woman shrugged her shoulders. "I had no time to see him."

Lestrade swore, and Holmes asked:

"But you saw something?"

"But do not worry," reassured us woman. "It seems to me, I know who he is."

"Who is he?" surprised Holmes and the inspector at the same time.

"An old soldier."

"Who?"

"A soldier of Oliver Cromwell time, I tell you. Better say he pretended to be a Cromwell's soldier. In a grey-green round soldier's helmet of XVII century."

We all stood puzzled silently.

"Nonsense!" said Lestrade. "Are you well? Why the helmet? Who goes to the Museum in the helmet of XVII century? Thompson!" then he called a sergeant.

"Has anyone entered the Museum in such an old time helmet?"

"No, sir! There were visitors in hats, but they left hats in the closet."

"Well! What helmet?"

"He had a helmet on, I'm telling you," the woman repeated stubbornly. "Iron grey-green helmet. I've seen such helmets last year in Stemp street at historical show parade of Cromwell's troops."

"Excuse me," intervened Holmes, "you want to say that he was in the XVII century's Army uniform?"

“I don’t remember. Did not notice... and there is a bit dark here. Visitors, in fact, have gone already. It is time to close the Museum, as usual, we begin at this time to turn out the light, leaving only emergency light. But the glimmering helmet I saw accurately.”

“Thompson!” turned to the sergeant Lestrade. “Look for the helmet! Fast!”

Meanwhile in the next room, the constables gathered the detainees.

“Well, Mr. Holmes,” said the inspector, who was looking sad, “let’s look at our detainees...”

There were four of them, late visitors of the Museum: Mr. Bull, a retired major, dark haired, with sideburns and with a contemptuous smile, dressed in an expensive blue suit and kid gloves. In the pockets of retired major they found cigars, a lighter, a purse and a gold watch. Then there was a student, Hockins, frightened and frail blond young man with shifty eyes and nervous hands, dressed in an old cloth coat with bulging pockets. Policeman found in his pockets only a notebook, a letter to his mother to Scotland and tweezers.

An artist Jofroi, unshaven Frenchman in a sweater and beret with a striped scarf around the throat, with a small flask of whiskey in the bag, cigarettes, matches, a comb, a set of paints with brushes and an album of sketches from models, and also a mirror, a screwdriver, an alarm clock and a pair of socks.

Lord Transey dressed in the latest fashion, with a bid beard, but completely bald, with a heavy gold chain on an expensive jacket, with a cane of ivory... Constables did not dare to feel up this important gentleman. Especially since Transey looked angry, his big bald head shook nervously.

Sergeant Thompson, withdrawing to one side of the inspector, reported that no any helmets were found.

“Well,” shrugged Lestrade, turning to Holmes. “What would you say?”

I did not let Holmes to answer.

“My dear Inspector,” I said yawning. “Your business is not worth a damn.”

In my mind I congratulated myself for a brilliant deduction line and continued as if lazily:

“I know who did it”.

“Wow!” Lestrade looked at me happily. “And who is he?”

“Be careful, Watson,” said Holmes. “We must not be wrong.”

But at that moment I was sure that there was no any error.

ANSWER:

“It is the major! See how he looked at us! You’ve seen it? It’s not just so! He tried to steal the Faberge egg, I assure you. You will see it for yourself, if just to try to think it over! So he was an officer. Huh? You know? Only he could be fond of the British Army history. He used an old helmet to frighten poor women. And I know that in the next hall they are having a dummy of Cromwell’s soldier!”

“All right,” said Lestrade, after hearing my words. “Where’s your damned helmet then?”

I shrugged my shoulders.

“And why did he have this helmet? Hell, I do not understand anything!” inspector Lestrade waved his hands and began to walk the floor nervously.

Holmes coughed.

“Friends,” said Holmes. “You don’t see the obvious things. No helmets at all! Only an idiot would come up with the idea to take an old Army helmet. In the hall where a robber happened to be, the lantern from the street shines through the colored glass, creating a picture of the execution of Mary Stuart (see, Watson, I know history too). In colors of this glass a green color is dominated, and this color paints all in the Museum hall – especially when they leave only a duty light. You can see it. And a bald head of one of our detainees was taken for a helmet Cromwell’s soldiers, as a green or grey iron helmet. It is no wonder, because it is difficult to imagine a person with the metal gleaming head.”

“How?” gasped Lestrade. “So you want to say that the Lord Transey...”
“Oh!” Holmes shook his index finger. “I didn’t say that. It is you saying this.”

6. The Flowering of the Strange Orchid



“Dr. Thomas Glume died on 15th June, 1881, and died in circumstances that can definitely be called strange...”

Inspector Lestrade paused, sipping brandy from his glass, and gathered his thoughts, trying to remember exactly all the details of the old case.

The three of us sat by the fireplace in our apartment on Baker Street spending the evening reminiscing about the investigations of bygone years. For the most part, however, Lestrade was doing it, Holmes and I listened, and only occasionally Holmes gave their comments.

“If I am not mistaken, Dr. Glume was found dead in his office by his secretary miss Penny. This woman, I tell you, I didn’t like her: she looked prim, haughty, dry, and, I note, there was some cruelty and anger in her. Although she was pretty and looked quite fashionable: painted lips and eyelashes, beautifully dressed, had long painted nails. But it’s a cold, predatory beauty, if you know what I mean. Unlike her Colonel Badham seemed to be friendly and sincere, he was Dr. Glume’s old friend, they lived together for a long time in India. Badham was an old, weak and painful, the man who lost a leg in battles, so he moved using the prosthesis and had always relied on a cane. Since the return of Dr. Glume from India, Badham has lived in the doctor’s house, helping him as much as possible in his work. And finally, there was another character in this drama: the servant Host, who had a typical bandit face and huge fists. I’d never want to meet him alone somewhere in a dark alley. He gave the impression of a calm person, but having a look at his eyes as I immediately realized that kind of fruit. Believe me, I have a lot of experience in this.”

“So,” continued Lestrade, sipping brandy, “Dr. Glume died, as I said, quite strange. Generally speaking, he was a strange man. He had a lot of money – 12 years ago he received a rich inheritance. But at the time of his death, he spent almost all the money on his collection: he collected expensive exotic flowers that were sent to him from around the world. For the most part, these flowers died, not because of English climate. But the doctor was not discouraged and ordered new and even more rare specimens.

About three weeks before his death, they brought to him a rather strange unknown flower from some incredibly distant and wild country. It was Orchid. English botanists considered it was a new

unknown in Europe plant. No one in Europe or America has ever seen such a flower. Dr. Glume put the Orchid in his study and admired it for days, waiting for the time of its flowering.

It blossomed the very day he died. The secretary found him dead on the floor near the window, on which this Orchid stood with flowers of strange shape and incredible, unusual beauty.

The Secretary called the doctor and the police. I ran the investigation. I confess that this Orchid had a hypnotic effect on me. I was looking at the flower, and it really scared me. After questioning the tenants, I turned to the Botanical reference books, many of which stood on the bookshelves of the deceased. And I read that, according to the references of travelers who have visited exotic lands, there are species of orchids, the aroma of which causes death.

Then there was a new trouble, which fully confirmed my fears that the death of Dr. Glume is caused by the flower. Coroner Stapleton, as looking at the flower, sniffed it and fell dead! The second body in this house! The Orchid was clearly deadly thing... I say, after the incident, I was afraid to approach the flower closer than three yards. Actually, I'm still afraid of orchids. Yes, Mr. Holmes and Mr. Watson, it may sound silly, but I'm afraid of orchids. If you had two corpses lying in front of your eyes, dead because of smelling flowers, I think you would understand me..."

Inspector Lestrade paused, gazing thoughtfully at the fire, and sipping his brandy.

"Well, well, well," I said, cause the inspector's terrible story really scared me. "Can a flower really kill?"

"A very interesting story," said Holmes from his chair. "So, Inspector, did the Orchid really kill those people?"

"No doubt," answered Lestrade. "That's right: the Orchid killed those people..."

"However," he continued after a moment, pouring himself another brandy from a large decanter, "we need, of course, clarity. Flower is a killer. But it had an accomplice, if I may say so. As you know, Mr. Holmes, I'm an old fox. There were some people who wanted to create the impression that the death was occurred by accident, because of careless handling of a poisonous plant. And I was about to believe it. But, as a careful person and a doubting man (the other on my place would believed it), I sent the flower to research it in Research Department, and began to collect information about the doctor and his three roommates.

As it turned out, all three had reasons to have Dr. Glume dead. The doctor made a will, divided all his stuff between secretary Penny, Colonel Badham, a servant Host and the Botanical Museum of London, where, up to the will, a flowers collection had to go. So, the situation was that Dr. Glume was going to order another 50 such orchids. But it would cost him an astronomical sum of money, the sum that would ruin Dr. Glume immediately after this purchase. He, a fanatical collector, was not afraid of such a fate – it was more important to get the passionately desired orchids. But three of his roommates, assistants and heirs quite clearly understood that in this case there will be no inheritance – they will not receive a penny. So there was a motive for the murder.

By the time I learned all this, the results of the analysis of the flower came. It turned out that the flower was filled with extremely poisonous powder – some cyanide, if I'm not mistaken. This killed Dr. Glume and coroner Stapleton. The doctor's house was searched, and in the study of Dr. Glume we found a can of cyanide, which, as it turned out, Dr. Glume used in his experiments. The can, by the way, had a large wide stopper, which used to be opened, apparently, using teeth. We found rubber gloves, one of them had traces of poison.

All of these allowed us to find the killer. One of those suspects."

Inspector Lestrade chatted the contents of his glass and finished his brandy in one gulp.

"Now, tell me, dear master of deduction," he said to Holmes. "Who was the murderer?"

Holmes leaned back in his chair and answered, smiling:

"You are a little cunning, my friend. You, for example, did not tell us which glove had traces of poison – right or left. Nor did you provide any other information that you may have had at

your disposal. Nevertheless, I am ready to answer your question and name the murderer. And you, Watson?”

“Me?” Holmes’ question took me by surprise. I’ve been thinking a little. “Yeah, I think I know the killer’s name, too. It’s not hard at all,” I waved to Lestrade. “Task for simpletons.”

Lestrade scratched his nose skeptically and looked at me with interest.

“Well, then get it out, Dr. Watson.”

ANSWER:

“It’s simple,” I explained. “The cork from the can of poison was opened with teeth. It is clear that Dr. Glume, knowing the danger of this substance, was unlikely to resort to the help of the teeth. I think miss Penny had to use her teeth; she’s a woman in the first place, and women, as you know, are weaker than men. And the most important thing is that she had long nails. And it is hard to open tight can when one has long nails. That’s why she had to use her teeth.”

I looked triumphantly at my friends: as you can see, I am also able to find the truth in the interweaving of mysteries.

But contrary to my expectations, Lestrade shook his head in disappointment, and Holmes, clapping his hands, said:

“Bravo, my friend! You think sensibly, though your reasoning is not entirely accurate. It’s really simple. You mentioned long nails of miss Penny, although forgot her lipstick. Her lips would had put traces on the cork. I don’t think it was her. But Colonel Badham is weak enough to pull the cork out with his hands. I am sure that the examination was to show that the tooth print on the cork belongs to him. Isn’t that so, Inspector?”

Inspector Lestrade scratched his head:

“Actually, there was no examination of the tooth print on the cork.”

“How did you figure it out then?” Holmes was surprised. “How did you discovered this case?”

“About the cork examination, it was not done,” the voice of Lestrade sounded awkward. “I, actually, proceeded from the fact that traces of poison were found on the left glove. And among the suspects was a Lefty only one – Colonel Badham. He confessed as soon as he was arrested.”

“That’s strange,” said Holmes, angrily puffing on his pipe. “It turns out that if the killer had not been left-handed, the crime would not have been discovered.”

“But it was discovered!” inspector Lestrade said stubbornly.

We stopped talking. Lestrade was a wrong person to argue with.

7. White Bird



“Yes, Mr. Holmes!” Lestrade, standing on the threshold of our room, waved the paper in his hand instead of greeting. “Here’s a new riddle for you! I wonder what your analytical mind will say?”

“Very glad to see you, Inspector. Especially so excited,” Holmes put the violin away, which he had been playing all Sunday morning. “Show me what you’ve got.”

“The Devonshire Post, Mr. Holmes,” Lestrade gave my friend the paper, and sat down in the chair opposite, taking his breath away. “I’m sorry, but I was in a hurry. I was in a hurry, so to speak, to see how you would be puzzled by the mystery of the Devonshire white birds. I bet you can’t solve this puzzle.”

“Let’s bet,” agreed Holmes. “Ten pounds?”

“Against my forty!” inspector Lestrade clapped his hands.

“Decided.”

“Ha-ha, Mr. Holmes! You’re going to lose!” and Lestrade shook his finger at the detective.

Holmes opened the paper. A huge headline crossed the entire front page: “White Oxenham birds – harbingers of death.”

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