

P L E A S A N T P L A C E S O F F L O R I D A

A PLEASANT PASTICHE
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THE CASE OF THE LOST £'S

As Chronicled by Amanuensis J.H.Watson, M.D.

Having recently decided that the world now was ready for the case which I have entitled as above, and which I was sure that my friend A. C. Doyle, the publisher's agent, would be anxious to offer his bookshop customers, I went to Cox's, my bank in the Strand, asked for my hermetically sealed tin box, and with the help of a can opener, took out my account of one of the most extraordinary crimes solved by Mr. Holmes.

It begins with the incident that a certain John Mulgrin had gone to his bank on Threadneedle Street to deposit at last his life savings which he'd decided were no longer safe hidden under his mattress. Laying the little bag on a depositor's writing desk in the lobby he had gone for a moment to one of the cashiers to ask how he should make out the deposit slip.

Returning, he was horrified to find that the bag had disappeared. There was a great uproar; no other depositor had been in the bank, and no one else near the desk. Scotland Yard had at once been called in, but got no results even after a week, to its chagrin. Finally Chief Detective Lestrade had come to Baker Street almost begging Mr. Holmes' assistance. The newspapers had been running thunderous editorials that peaceful citizens could thus be robbed in daylight, in a bank of all places and yet the police, highly paid by said citizens, could not protect them, etc., etc.

Mr. Holmes listened with his accustomed detachment, and at last said.....*1

"Well, Lestrade, I should be happy to lend my assistance to the case, but much time has been lost, and valuable evidence destroyed by now. However, if you will kindly arrange for Mr. Mulgrin to be at the bank this afternoon at 2:00 o'clock, I shall attempt to acquaint myself with the facts of the case and its locale at the same time. Watson, I trust you will come along."

So it happened that early that afternoon Holmes and I found ourselves in the offices of the bank on Threadneedle Street in the company of Lestrade and Mr. Sidney Pennyworth, a vice president of that eminent institution. A middle-aged man was shown in and introduced to us as John Mulgrin. He addressed Holmes immediately, "God help me, Mr. Holmes, I am trusting to you to explain this unfortunate event. Please tell me what has happened, and how I can recover my savings."

"Come now," replied Holmes, "I have had no opportunity to examine the evidence. Indeed, beside the facts that you are a bachelor, that you boxed a good deal in your youth, that you are a cyclist, and do quite a lot of typing, that you have been in China for a time, and that you have recently returned to the City from the south-west---Horsham, I should say---I know nothing of you or your case beyond Lestrade's brief account and what I have read in the newspapers."

"But how then . . . ?" "Tut, tut, it is nothing to those who are acquainted with my methods," Holmes interrupted. "Those who have read Dr. Watson's chronicles of our mutual adventures will easily recognize the situations in which I have made similar identifications. But come, tell us your story in your own words."

Mulgrin thereupon recounted what we had already learned from Lestrade and the newspapers, adding a few details here and there. Holmes gave him complete attention, even making an occasional note on his cuff. When Mulgrin had finished his tale, we moved from the offices to the business area and lobby of the bank, where the disappearance had taken place. Here my friend became another person, the hunter attuned to the hunt. Running, squatting, pausing now to measure, suddenly whipping out his glass for a close look at the rug, or a chair, or the counter leg. Out came several envelopes and into them went a tuft of hair, a bit of dust, two or three colored beads, a pile of ash, and what I took to be the end of a leather thong. Then Holmes questioned Mulgrin, "Tell me, Sir, were your missing pounds contained in the type of bag called a reticule?" "Yes." "Aha! and do you keep a pet of any kind?" "No, indeed." Then to the vice president of the bank, "Do any of the employees keep pets?" "I really don't know, we shall have to inquire." "But in any case, not on the bank premises?" "Oh, no, of that I am positive."

"Well, what do you make of it, Holmes?" queried Lestrade. "It is very difficult at this late date," said Holmes. "If a herd of buffaloes had passed through here there could not be a greater mess."

"But surely," said Mulgrin, "you have a theory, surely you can make an educated guess." "No, no," replied Holmes, "I never guess. It is a shocking habit--destructive to the logical faculty. No,

this looks like a three-pipe problem. Watson and I will leave you now, and I will get in touch with Lestrade when I have formed an opinion. Come, Watson, Sarasate plays this afternoon at the Albert Hall, and we can arrive just in time if we find a skillful cabbie. Good day, gentlemen!"

That was his last word on the matter. Not one word more did he venture, not through the afternoon's delightful concert (spoiled for me by his unfortunate habit of humming along with the violinist), not over a copious meal at The Criterion, nor in the cab on the way home to Baker Street. Once there, I settled down to attempt once more getting through Winwood Read's Martyrdom of Man; Holmes lit his pipe and was soon lost in thought, oblivious of my presence. But I could not concentrate on the book in my hands, my thoughts kept coming back to the events of the day. Suddenly in the midst of my reverie I heard Holmes's voice, "You are quite right, Watson, things are much more serious than the few facts would indicate. It was not Mulgrin's paltry savings they were after. I venture we are on the track of the most" But whatever Holmes had in mind was never pronounced, for there erupted an unspeakable tumult in the street, then a banging, bumping, and thumping on the stairway, the door to our rooms was pushed violently open, and into the room sprang.....*2

.... a dozen disreputable street Arabs. It was Holmes' unofficial Police force--the Baker Street irregulars. They quickly formed a line, and Wiggins, as usual, reported, "Got 'em here as soon as I could after getting your message, sir."

"Very good, Wiggins," said Holmes, "but I have told you before to report to me alone, and have the rest of the lads remain in the street. Mrs. Hudson gets quite enough disturbances without you boy invading the house." As the youths shuffled their naked feet somewhat abashedly, Holmes continued, "Since you are all here, however, I will give you your instructions. I want you to locate a man who owns and trains animals. He will probably have several different types of animals, and one of them will be a small monkey. Is that clear?"

"Yes, sir," replied Wiggins.

"Here's a days wages in advance." Handing each of them a shilling, he said, "Now, off you go," and they streamed down the stairs and into the street.

As soon as they had left, I turned to Holmes and said.....*3

"This business of sending Wiggins and his confederates on this search has me somewhat mystified, Holmes....no doubt, you sent the Baker Street Irregulars out to search for an animal trainer and small monkey based on the clues you had found at the bank; but can we be so sure that these clues are leading us in the proper direction....after all, Holmes, a Monkey....guilty of this deed!"

"I must say," responded Sherlock Holmes laying down the pipe which

he had been furiously puffing, "Watson, I must say that you sometimes have the glimmerings of Deductive Reasoning that I have tried to inculcate in you for years!" "These 'clues' in the bank have been deliberately planted by the "Napoleon of Crime" himself..... none other than our old friend Professor Moriarty!" "My suspicions, Watson, were aroused by the presence amongst the clues...clues, mind you, that seemingly point to an animal trainer--the beads, the leather thong (obviously for some kind of animal) and tuft of hairs (I have determined they belong to the species, *Macacus rhesus*) amongst the clues, mind you, of ash of an expensive and costly Latakia pipe tobacco made especially for the good Professor by an Exclusive Tobacconist in 'Change Alley....I, of course, wrote a Monograph of Tobacco ashes detailing this subject, recently."

"I fear Moriarty has deliberately left these clues to focus my attention away from his criminal activities. Mr. Sidney Pennyworth, the vice-president of the bank, is, I fear, an unwilling confederate of this Evil Master-Mind. He has been somehow entrapped in the Tentacles of Moriarty's Criminal Empire of Thieves, Murderers, and worst of all, Vile Blackmailers. This business at the bank is without a doubt a charade perpetrated on us by Mr. Mulgrin through Mr. Sidney Pennyworth's aid."

"Professor Moriarty has through his many criminal contacts in the underworld been able to find something untowards in Mr. Sidney Pennyworth's past and is, no doubt, using him for his own devious and dastardly purposes."

"But, Holmes," I interposed, asking a question I supposed needed answering, "why have Wiggins and his companions been sent out on such an unnecessary quest to seek answers for something you already knew?" "Simply this, Watson, I have been alerted from my sources in the Police that in the past few months Moriarty has imported the infamous cat-burglar "Jocko" (a former circus aerialist) and his pet monkey (no doubt, because of "Jocko's" string of unsolved cat-burglaries he has perpetrated in Paris--it is believed--with the aid of his pet monkey). Paris Police have been at their wits end trying to catch this burglar in his recent escapades and now he suddenly makes his appearance in England. Why should this master criminal suddenly come at the behest of the Professor, except to aid the good Professor and his criminal confederates in some stupendous criminal enterprise....as of yet unknown!"

"Through the good offices of my brother, Mycroft, I have kept the Professor's Criminal Headquarters under constant surveillance--unbeknownst to you, my good Doctor....little have you suspected my secret activities over the past few months; but Professor Moriarty--fox that he is--is well aware that he is under my watchful eye and hopes to lead me onto a false trail. Moriarty has even stationed one of his accomplices in the house directly across from our lodgings here on Baker Street to watch our every move.

Moriarty believes, no doubt, that we will be occupied in a bootless wild-goose chase while he carries out his master plan and Watson, I believe Moriarty has planned his move for tonight! Yes, Watson, I believe Moriarty has planned his criminal 'coup' for tonight and I believe "Jocko's" monkey is 'the' key to the alleged theft of the paltry amount in Mr. Mulgrin's reticule at the Bank.... but also....and this is important.... 'the' key to Moriarty's upcoming criminal 'coup'."

There were many unanswered questions on my mind about Holmes's startling and amazing deductions which were still perplexing me, but they were to remain unanswered for the time being, because the telephone then rang. Sherlock answered immediately with a nervous impatience. After the telephone call was concluded, Holmes turned to me and said "So Moriarty thinks to occupy us with a 'goose' while he and his confederates steal 'the Common from under the Gander'! That was my brother, Mycroft," Holmes continued. "Mycroft has given me the final piece in the puzzle....he has seen the key to the whole mystery right in the 'Times'," Sherlock said emphatically! "Professor Moriarty is really 'tweaking' our noses with this escapade and will make us the laughing-stock of England if we do not foil him." Thumbing through the pages of the "London Times", Holmes found the story on page 9-B. The story was entitled, "Lloyd's of Threadneedle Street at the Exchange Building has just completed a new display room for its priceless Admiral Nelson Collection, etc." "The Bank where the Mulgrin theft occurred is right directly across from the Exchange where Lloyd's of London is housed and any good cat-burglar/aerialist(and monkey to aid to open windows) could do it in a snap." "Now, Watson, grab your pistol and hurry before it gets too dark this evening...it's almost 8:00 P.M. now!"*4

As I strode briskly to the desk to retrieve my service revolver, there came a bounding up the stairs followed by a rapid knock on the door. Holmes stepped to the door and upon opening it was nearly knocked down by Wiggins. Breathlessly, Wiggins reported, "Mr. Holmes, an organ grinder with a monkey has been observed performing on the corner of Threadneedle and Darning Ave."

"Excellent, Master Wiggins. Another job well done. Quick, Watson, not a moment to lose. If my memory serves me correctly, the Exchange Building closes at 8:00."

Holmes hailed a hansom cab and directed the driver to the corner of Threadneedle and Tailor. In the diminishing light of the cab, Holmes sat back, his chin resting on his chest, in deep thought. The cab lurched to a stop, we departed and hurried the next block to the Exchange Building, adjacent to Darning Ave.

On the dimlit corner stood a solitary figure holding a small hand organ. We crossed over to him and Holmes said "Good evening, Jocko. It would appear your choreographer has danced away." As the man turned to face us, his mouth fell open in surprise and I

noticed it was none other than John Mulgrin, alias Jocko! Holmes said "The game is up, Jocko. Would you prefer to report a missing monkey now, or have us wait until he unlocks the side window of the Exchange Building and be arrested for attempted burglary? It really makes no difference at this point, because Scotland Yard will have you back in Paris inside of a week." At this, Jocko replied, "Mr. Holmes, it would appear my monkey is missing."

After contacting Lestrade, we waited patiently for Scotland Yard to arrive. We turned Jocko over to Lestrade and they proceeded to retrieve the monkey from the Exchange Building. We then returned to our familiar haunts at 221 B Baker Street.

As we lit our pipes, and I stepped to the sideboard for the gasogene, I queried Holmes as to the solution of the case. Holmes replied, "Elementary, Watson. As I have often stated 'Things are not always as they at first appear'. My first conclusion was that since it was not possible for anyone to have stolen Mr. Mulgrin's reticule (because noone had been near the desk), then there was no reticule stolen. As I told you before, this was just a ploy by the Professor to distract us from the true plan. The fact that I found a tuft of hair (Macacus rhesus), a piece of leather thong, and the colored beads, led me to suspect Mr. Mulgrin of being Jocko from the beginning. I could not help noticing that Mr. Mulgrin had borrowed some of the Professor's pipe tobacco, probably unbeknownst to the Professor, thus the ash. Wiggins report cinched all my deductions and reinforced my fear that tonight would be the night of action."

"But Holmes, what of Mr. Pennyworth?" Holmes replied, "I deeply suspect Mr. Pennyworth has been embezzling his firm and the Professor had somehow gotten wind of this, thus obtaining control of him. I shan't be surprised to read in the evening paper tomorrow a story relating the suicide of our esteemed Pennyworth."

"Good God, Holmes, how can you say that?" "Simple, Watson. Knowing the reputation of the Pennyworth family name, I can draw no other conclusion as to his course of action after he learns of the apprehension of John Mulgrin. His fear of discovery will get the best of him and he will take the easy way out." *5

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(We are sorry that due to illness, Mr. Post was unable to contribute as planned.)