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Special Opposites Issue, 2000

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Opposites are not just things that may not go together. Opposites may also be things that are not what you'd expect. "Contrary" is one of the definitions of opposite. This issue pays tribute to things that do not necessarily go together, but, upon reflection, make for a happy convergence of divergent items.

If we were truly opposite, we would say, "We hope you do not find this issue even subtly amusing." What we mean is that "We hope you find this issue tremendously entertaining." But wait. What's the opposite of "issue"? What's the opposite of "this?" Let's rethink this.

The Papers on the Sundial

Christmas in Summer Department

Miracle on Baker Street

by Tom Takach

"Oh yes," said Holmes. "I deduced your existence long before that eloquent reply to Virginia O'Hanlon's question appeared in *The New York Sun*. It wasn't difficult for one possessed of my especial talents."

"You yourself have long been an interesting case to me, Mr. Holmes." The

portly gent with the rosy cheeks, snow-white beard and engaging smile gratefully accepted his host's offer of a second cup of tea. Not that a winter's evening on Baker Street could even be considered remotely cold by old Kris's standards. It was just that he so seldom allowed himself the luxury of a relaxed,

amiable chat that he had no wish to see the evening end too soon. There was something simple yet very fulfilling in the sharing of a warm beverage with a friend, and Kris was beginning to consider Mr. Holmes just that, though this was their first meeting ever.

Kris gazed into the cheery fire and said, "I have always wondered why you never wrote to me before now. I, of course, am quite familiar with

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continued from page 1 reputation, and many times was in hopes that I would hear from you so that I might supply your modest holiday wants. Why am I finally hearing from you after all these years?"

The great detective lit a cigarette, allowed himself a few puffs, then began slowly.

"It's just that, of late, I have



been feeling that London really has no need of me anymore. Years ago, I found my time constantly occupied, attributable in no small part to the schemes of Professor Moriarty." Holmes looked searchingly into his guest's eyes as he put the cigarette to his lips once more.

"Yes," replied the ruddy-faced chap. "The name *is* familiar to me. He was one of a select few who make my 'naughty' list every year without fail. He ended up passing from this life unloved and unmourned. A tragic story."

Holmes threw his cigarette

into the fire with disgust. "Yes, a tragic story. The more so because the end of his existence signaled the beginning of the decline of my own. True genius is all too rare, as I have, to my chagrin, come to realize since his death. I want you to bring him back to life, so that I may once more face an adversary worthy of my steel. That is what I am asking of you during this season which is your own."

The perpetual smile disappeared from the jolly man's face, replaced by a look of sadness mingled with a certain weariness. "I understand you completely, my friend. Many people have asked me over the years to have departed loved ones returned to them. Please understand that, although I have many gifts which it *is* within my power to call upon, that is not one of them. Surely life without this man cannot be such a bleak prospect?"

Holmes rose from his chair and began pacing back and forth very slowly, his chin resting upon his breast. "As

I say, I feel there is nothing left for me that would justify my existence on this globe. Forgive me for saying so, but sometimes I almost feel like...." His sentiments were silenced as his portly guest pulled himself from his chair with some difficulty and place his arm around the shoulder of the man in torment.

"Listen to me. You must yield to my greater experience. After all, I have been around for what may seem an eternity as mortal reckons time. There is a gift which I possess which I use only sparingly. I believe that your case demands that it be employed. It is with my power, within limits, to



know the future. I would like to relate just one incident to you, and then you may decide for yourself if your existence truly lacks meaning. Please sit down."

It was, to say the least, unusual for Holmes to be the

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continued from page 2 who was surprised by a revelation. A strange sensation, to be sure. He resumed his seat, never taking his eyes from his uncommon visitor. Trying to put himself in the shoes of his good Watson, who was perpetually astonished, he decided to pour himself a generous glass of whisky. After its warming influence permeated his system, he said, "Pray, continue."

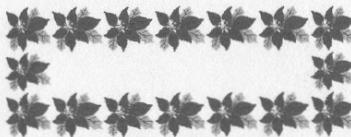
Kris stood in front of the fireplace, eyes fixed on the man who was longing to hear words of comfort spoken. Another novel position for the great detective to be in. The man who turned dreams into reality continued.

"Relieving pain and preserving the life and spirit of another is the greatest good that man can aspire to on this place of his existence. No doubt this is even more rewarding when this office may be performed for a friend. And I think that I may refer to John H. Watson as a particular friend of yours, may I not?"

Holmes face rapidly

drained of all color. "Wat...Watson, my dear Watson," he stammered. "What are you saying?"

"Only this," said Kris, lighting his pipe and drawing upon it slowly. "Dr. Watson will marry again—wait—let me finish. He will marry again, he will leave Baker Street, and he will know greater happiness than has been his lot since his beloved Mary passed on years ago. However—it will not last. He will lose his new wife in a terrible railway accident. He will become a morose recluse, permitting none to cross his doorstep. He will feel very much the way you feel tonight. He is a doctor. He



knows how to leave his suffering behind, and he will be very tempted to apply that knowledge to his own case. Only a great friend who has shared so much with him, one who has gained his complete and utter trust, will be able to stay his hand from this course

of action. That friend is you, Mr. Holmes. If you are not here to intervene...."

For the third time in his life, Holmes wept. Bitterly and profusely. He regained his composure only after many minutes had passed. Looking steadfastly at his guest, he offered, "It is so easy to become ensnared in one's own problems, that we fail to give adequate consideration to how our actions may affect others. I am a fairly keen student and I feel that this lesson will never leave me. Thank you for coming tonight and giving me the guidance which I now realize that I needed so desperately. This gift which you give to me freely I accept with ceaseless gratitude. Again...I thank you."

Kris nodded his head, beaming a great smile once more, and thanked the Baker Street sleuth for a pleasurable evening. Disappearing slowly as he stood in front of the fireplace, he wished his friend the compliments of the season.

The Professor and Mary Ann

FADE IN

The Professor is sitting in his favorite chair napping, his feet on an ottoman. He looks contented, as if he were remembering something from long ago. Suddenly there is an ear-splitting shriek.

MARY ANN (offstage)
James!
The Professor's eyes pop open.

MARY ANN (offstage)
James!
The Professor moves his feet off the ottoman.

MARY ANN (offstage)
James!
The Professor starts to stand, remains in a crouch.

MARY ANN (entering)
Have you taken out the trash?

PROFESSOR
I—I was just about to.

MARY ANN
See that you do it right this time. Last time you threw out my piccolo.
Mary Ann exits.

PROFESSOR
I wonder why.
The Professor exits right and returns with a large bag. As he walks by the bookcase with a piccolo on it, he leers at it, his hand reaching for it.

MARY ANN (offstage)
James!
The Professor draws away quickly. He goes to the door and opens it.

SEBASTIAN (entering from the door, with a small bowl)
Hey, Jamesie boy.

PROFESSOR
What do you want, Moran?

SEBASTIAN
Beryl sent me up for some sugar.

PROFESSOR
Can't you see I'm busy?

SEBASTIAN
I see you've got the bag.

PROFESSOR
Don't talk about my wife that way.

MARY ANN (offstage)
I heard that.

PROFESSOR (cringing)

Look, Moran. Just get your sugar and go.
Sebastian exits left into the kitchen and returns instantly with a large pot full of sugar.

PROFESSOR
I thought you said some sugar, not all the sugar in London.

SEBASTIAN
Beryl's making fudge.

PROFESSOR
Fudge, huh?
The Professor drops the bag and walks away.

PROFESSOR
Fudge, huh? (Beat) What happened to us, Moran?

SEBASTIAN
What do you mean, Jamesie boy?

PROFESSOR
Stop calling me that. (Beat) Where did we go wrong? We used to be able to do anything. London was ours. We had minions, Moran. Minions.

SEBASTIAN
Yeah, they go great in salads.

PROFESSOR
Not

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onions, you idiot. What did we do wrong?

SEBASTIAN

It was that detective guy, wasn't it?

PROFESSOR

That detective guy. Yes, indeed, it was that detective guy.

MARY ANN (offstage)

Don't start getting upset, James. You know it makes you break out in hives.

PROFESSOR

To be free of this infernal woman.

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, Beryl drives me nuts sometimes too. How about a game of ten pins?

PROFESSOR

No, Moran, I meant—

SEBASTIAN

Why don't we go for a few games?

PROFESSOR

I couldn't.

SEBASTIAN

Sure you could.

PROFESSOR

No, really I can't.

Sebastian puts down the pot of sugar and pretends to play ten pins. He mimes holding a ball in front of his face.

SEBASTIAN

Sure you can. You just hold the ball like this...and pull your arm back like this...and let go.

Sebastian whirls around, nearly bumping into the Professor.

PROFESSOR

Knock it off, Moran.

Sebastian mimes another ball throw, whirls around, loses his balance and falls over, knocking over the bookcase as well. It falls with a great crash, causing Sebastian to run into the Professor.

SEBASTIAN

Gotta go, Jamesie.

PROFESSOR

Moran.

SEBASTIAN

See you later.

PROFESSOR

Moran.

MARY ANN (entering from the kitchen)

James, what in the world is going on?

PROFESSOR

Err, uh—it was Moran—that goof Moran.

MARY ANN

Have you had a falling out with your friend, James?

PROFESSOR

No, I just—

MARY ANN (pulling out something from under the bookcase)

My piccolo.

PROFESSOR (punching the air)

That Moran. Pow! Zing!

MARY ANN

What's the matter, James?

PROFESSOR (walking over to his chair)

You wouldn't understand.

MARY ANN

Working in the Underground got you down?

PROFESSOR

Nahh.

MARY ANN

Is it the trash, James? If it bothers you that much, I'll take it out. Besides, I'd feel much better about my piccolo.

PROFESSOR

It's not the trash.

MARY ANN

Then what is it?

PROFESSOR

It's just that, well, I—I just don't have much fun anymore.

MARY ANN

You mean when you used to be the Caesar of Crime or

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whatever they called you?

PROFESSOR

The Napoleon of Crime.

MARY ANN

One of those rulers.

PROFESSOR

Yeah.

MARY ANN

We all have to grow up sometime.

PROFESSOR

But I was good at it, Mary Ann. I had everything—just under my thumb. If you wanted anything I could get it for you.

MARY ANN

Anything, eh?

PROFESSOR

Now all I can get you is a discount on a subway ticket

once a month.

MARY ANN

Come on, James. It's not that bad.

The Professor sinks into his chair and puts his feet on the ottoman.

MARY ANN

Maybe it is. I've been saving this for something special, but I guess now is as good a time as any.

Mary Ann goes over to the desk and reaches under the center drawer. She pulls out a large envelope and hands it to the Professor.

PROFESSOR

What's this?

MARY ANN

Open it.

The Professor opens it to

reveal a photograph.

PROFESSOR

My lord, Mary Ann. It's Dr. Watson and Irene Adler. And Violet Smith.

MARY ANN

I'm sure you can put that to good use.

PROFESSOR (standing up) I don't know what to say.

MARY ANN

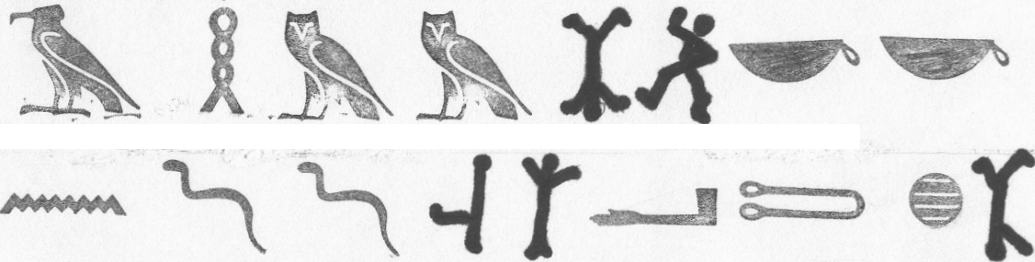
Don't say anything. Just make sure the diamonds you get me are bigger than the Royal Family's.

PROFESSOR (running to the front door)

Hey, Moran. Forget the ten pins. We've got work to do. (taking Mary Ann into his arms) Mary Ann, you're the greatest.

FADE OUT

Historical Footnote Department



This was discovered on the wall of a recently excavated pyramid in Egypt. Archaeologists are still trying to decipher the cryptic references.

This Fall on the HW

Eustace! James Garner stars as Eustace Brackenstall, a saucy septuagenarian used to getting his own way. But when he loses his money he is forced to turn his home into a boarding house. The laughs ensue when Lady Brackenstall's (Carol Burnett) old boyfriend Crocker (Patrick Stewart) rents a room. From the creators of *My Mother the Car*. Thursdays at 8:00 PM.

The Art of Decoration. The great Austrian interior decorator brings his European ideas to America. Baron Gruner gives wonderful advice and hands-on tips for displaying anything and everything. In the premiere episode, he discusses Northern Wei dynasty pottery with Dr. Hill Barton. Saturdays at 9:00 AM.

Target Practice. Maria Pinto Gibson (Jennifer Lopez) is a police detective with a checkered past. When she teams up with partner Grace Dunbar (Jennifer Aniston) the laughs fly almost as fast as the ammo. From the producers of *Married...With Children*. Tuesdays at 8:30 PM.

The Scowlers. A Film by Ken Burns. In this 78-hour epic, Ken Burns (*The Civil War*, *Brooklyn Bridge*, *Baseball*) details the rise and fall of this Gilmerton Mountain dynasty. Interviews with the descendants of Jack McGinty, James Scott, Ted Baldwin and other Vermissa Valley residents. Wednesdays at 9:00 PM.

Secret Agent Man. Each week, master of disguise Neville St. Clair (Michael Richards)

enters a world of beggars, crime and decay. His job: do whatever he can to make the world safe. His only help: his wit and a jacket full of coins. From the producers of *Home Improvement*. Saturdays at 8:00 PM.

Eukemuba Presents The Grimpen Mire Dog Trials. Each week, the finest dogs from around the world compete to determine who is the fastest, most agile canine ever. In addition to the usual tunnel runs, levers and jumps, the Grimpen Mire is famous for its Boulder Leaps, Marsh Swims, Mine Escapes and Phosphorescent Fur Paint competition. A challenge for both dog and owner. Thursdays at 7:30 PM.

Who Wants to Be an Ex-Millionaire? Host Charles August Milverton cajoles, threatens and extorts his guests into giving up their money. Tuesdays and Fridays at 9:00 PM.

Churchscapes with Josiah. Josiah Amberley and his wife tour Europe painting the major churches in the capitals. The Amberleys show their inimitable techniques and reveal a secret or two in each episode. Saturdays at 10:00 AM.

Larry King of Bohemia Live. Moving from CNN, Larry King of Bohemia talks with the newsmakers of yesterday and today. Weekdays at 11:30 PM.

It's not too early to sign up for
**Sherlock's Sunshine
Celebration Birthday Bash**

on January 29, 2000. At 6:00pm, we will meet at Leverock's in St. Petersburg to celebrate Sherlock's 146th birthday. Presentations are expected on anything Sherlockian from everyone present. Food orders will be from the menu. Room reservation is \$6.00 per person and will include house wine for toasts. Send payment and reservation form below to Carl L. Heifetz, Representative both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople,

Reservation deadline is January 15, 2000.

✂

Count me in! I'll meet you at 6:00 p.m. Enclosed is my
\$ _____ to cover costs for _____ person(s).

____ Also enclosed is \$1.00 for the Marshall/Wood Fund.(optional)
Send directions to:

Name(s)

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone and/or E-mail

My presentation will be (example: a poem, a limerick, a joke, a
paper on) _____

✂

Notice: You may be contacted to also perform a toast.
Send payments & reservations to: Carl L. Heifetz,

**Hey, David! Send me info on The
Florida Wessex Cup X**

I know it's going to be on February 15th at Tampa Bay Downs in Oldsmar, but when should I be there, how do I get there and how much do I need to send you for a reservation? Oh yeah, and what's for lunch? I am definitely interested!

Send information to:

Name(s)

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone and/or E-mail

Mail to: David McCallister, 8142 Quail Hollow Blvd., Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

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Mail to: David McCallister,

The Pleasant Places of Florida

*Founded: 1972
by Leslie Marshall (dec.)*

Recorder Emeritus: Dr. Benton Wood

For the record:

THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS

David McCallister, Master of the House,

Jeff & Wanda Dow, The Papers on the Sundial,

Carl L. Heifetz, Representative both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople,

Mike Bryan, The Unopened Newspaper,

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THIS IS THE EXPIRATION DATE OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERSHIP.**

**Pleasant Places of Florida
The Papers On The Sundial**

