



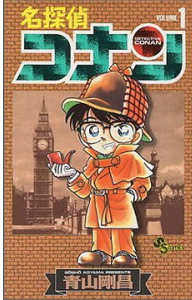
2008

# Communication No. 285

The Pleasant Places of Florida

## From the Papers on the Sundial:

In an effort to increase submissions, we will be dedicating each issue to a particular theme or story in the Canon. Please make note of upcoming subjects and let us hear from you.!



## Case Closed – A Japanese Manga

The English dubbed episodes began airing on Cartoon Network as part of their Adult Swim programming block on May 24, 2004. Fifty episodes aired until it was canceled in January 2005 due to low ratings. The dubbed episodes aired in Canada on *YTV's Bionix* programming block from April 7, 2006

until it was cancelled on September 2, 2006. They also aired on the *Funimation Channel* programming block on *CoLOURS TV* starting June 19, 2006. As of 2008, *Funimation* has released a total of 82 episodes to Region 1 DVD. On July 22, 2008, *Funimation* released its first 26-episode season box set, with a second season set released on September 30th, 2008.

## Sherlock Holmes and the Plague of Dracula

*Type of material: Trade Paperback Publisher: Mountainside Press, Shaftsbury VT 05262 Year: 2006*

*Author: Stephen Seitz Price: \$16.95*

This is, as advertised, a tale of Holmes and the plague carried by Count Dracula. It opens with Holmes being hired by Mina Murray to inquire into the whereabouts of her fiancée, Jonathan Harker. The events in this tale interconnect with those recounted by Bram Stoker in his classic book, *Dracula*. It concludes with the return from the dead of Holmes as recounted in *The Empty House*. Its action takes place over a period of time that includes the events of *Silver Blaze* and *The Final Problem* as well as the Great Hiatus.

For Sherlockians who adhere to the Great Detective's dictum, "Ghosts need not apply," the book manages to be fully satisfactory. From time to time, uneasiness creeps in and one fears that a supernatural explanation will be invoked, however, it never happens. That is not to say that the Canon is not twisted a bit here and there, or that Holmes and Watson cross every 't' and dot every 'i.' There are loose ends and unexplained events,

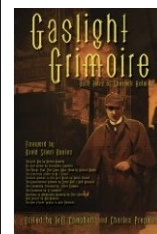
but then, these exist in life every day.

In reading the book, I found my greatest problem to be my own expectation of some descent into romanticism and vampire voodoo, as is so common in recent vampire tales. I fully expected Holmes to take up with a vampire Irene Adler and for the two of them to dance off into a Hollywood sunset to a Romberg tune. It simply doesn't happen. Holmes and Watson struggle with the events cited in *Dracula* as the Count allies with Professor Moriarty in a gigantic scheme to acquire a failing Banking firm and create a legitimate front to 'launder' the illicit income of the Professor's empire.

The events as described are, within limits, reasonable and realistic. The explanations given for the vampire phenomena are plausible and entertaining and the actions described can be 'shoehorned' into the Canon as it stands. The writing is well done and flows neatly, with no more than a few Americanisms as is common to most pastiches penned on this side of the Atlantic. At least it does not contain the hideous amalgam of post-WWII British usage and cockney slang found in some modern UK efforts.

I had been reluctant to try the book because of my fears of another vampire novel and I was very pleasantly surprised that I did not get 'good vampires' and 'bad vampires' locked in a struggle to save/doom humanity. Instead, I got the Great Detective and the Good Doctor facing a very real and very serious situation using their wits and his genius to resolve it.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, October, 2008.



## Gaslight Grimoire: Fantastic Tales of Sherlock Holmes

*Type of material: Trade Paperback Publisher: Edge Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing Year: 2008*

*Author: J. R. Campbell and Charles Prepolec, eds. Price: \$16.95*

This is a collection of Sherlockian tales in which, to quote David Stuart Davies' Forward, "Ghosts may apply." Each of the tales involves some 'supernatural' element, a Djinn, a Vampire, a painting, quite a variety of individuals and items. In fact, Chico Kidd and Rick Kennett's *The Grantchester Grimoire* is only the second pastiche I know of that pairs Holmes and Hodgson's Carnacki the Ghost Finder(cont. on page 2)



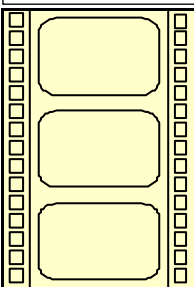
(cont. from page 1) in a single tale. Further, each tale is written by one who knows Holmes and Watson intimately, which makes them disturbing at the very least.

The stage is set by the opening tale, *The Lost Boy* by Barbara Hambly. When the Darling children disappear, Mr. Darling consults Sherlock Holmes and Mrs. Darling goes to an old friend who, like her, knew Peter Pan from her youth. At the end of this sad and lovely story, one is left wondering who, exactly, was *The Lost Boy* of the title.

Each of the tales has its own context and viewpoint. Nothing carries across from one to the next except the certainty that things will be not quite what they seem. The sheer nastiness of the villain in Christopher Sequeira's *His Last Arrow* is balanced by the delight of an aged Holmes in his (2nd?) meeting with Count Dracula in Bob Madison's *Red Sunset*." Martin Powell's *Sherlock Holmes in the Lost World* gives new meaning to 'Non-stop Adventure' with a surprise villain thrown in as an extra. Strictly speaking, Chris Roberson's *Merridew of Abominable Memory* has no supernatural element, but it is a true horror story and it fits right in with the rest of the collection.

As is true with most anthologies, some tales appeal to one taste and some to another. This group seems well mixed, with a variety of approaches and themes. I have mostly commented on those stories that appealed to me. There was, however, one perfectly marvelous tale by Kim Newman called *The Red Planet League* that deserves special attention. It is told by "...your humble narrator - Colonel Sebastian 'Basher' Moran ..." and it is worth the reading if only for the delicious villainies of 'Basher.' Of the eleven tales included, all are worth reading and several will stand up to re-reading. The only bad feature I found was the quality of the binding on my copy, which seems to induce cover curl.

**Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, October, 2008.**



**ANOTHER FILM FESTIVAL** is being planned for April, 2009. Any suggestions you have for films, please contact The Unopened Newspaper, at

**SUBMISSIONS**

We welcome any and all submissions for print. Read something with a Sherlockian twist? Let us know! Run across an interesting website? Give a short review or just tell us what you like about it. Poetry? Artwork? Send it along snail mail or email. We can scan or copy & paste with the best of 'em. (Please include return postage if you want it back.) Ideally, articles should be no longer than 1000 words. We even want to hear about Sherlockian references in everyday life (This week on *Cash Cab* one of the questions was 'Who did Sherlock Holmes refer to as the Napoleon of Crime?') Rants and Raves welcome, but again, keep your word limit down (and clean). If you can make a Sherlockian connection, (re: the Phillimore puzzle at the Fall Gathering) submit it.

\*The contestant didn't know the answer by the way. Cretins.

**He's everywhere ...** according to the Societe Sherlock Holmes de France, the Park Plaza Sherlock Holmes at 108 Baker Street, London has contacted Guinness World Records, submitting a request to attempt to set a world record for the most people dressed as Sherlock Holmes in one place at one time. No date has been set for the event... Each Saturday there was a mystery tour of Maizuru, Japan from Oct. 18 to Nov. 30 and on Nov. 8 there was a Sherlock Holmes Symposium... In *How To Read Novels Like A Professor*, Holmes is brought up several times. In a discussion about character emblems: "This practice goes back at a minimum to Sherlock Holmes, with his deerstalker (which he actually wears infrequently), his meerschaum pipe, and his 7% solution of cocaine." In a discussion about Hemingway, the author states "That, my dear Watson, is what is so remarkable. "Nice" is the dog that didn't bark in the night." ... You can pre-order *Close to Holmes: A Look at The Connections Between Historical London, Sherlock Holmes and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* by Alistair Duncan on Amazon.com. It's due out on February 1, 2009, so you'll have to use a gift card if it's a Christmas present ... Allen J. Hubin, founding editor of *The Armchair Detective* has recently donated the majority of his collection to the U. of M.. Over 116 boxes of material was delivered to the Anderson Library. Looks like any serious student can plan on a week's worth of over-nighters in Minneapolis! ...In November, *Novosti* (the Russian News & Information Agency) reported that 16 of their best police officers were awarded marble statuettes of Sherlock Holmes... Although the Museum of the Moving Image has closed in London, *The Movieum* has now opened at County Hall (across from Parliament). Among the many artifacts it houses is the actual 221B sitting room set made famous by the Granada tv series. Check it out at <http://www.the-movieum.com/Latest/Sherlock-holmes-comes-to-the-movieum.html> ... We hear that the *Lost Cases of Sherlock Holmes* computer game can be downloaded from [www.legacygames.com/download\\_games/394/the\\_lost\\_cases\\_of\\_sherlock\\_holmes/](http://www.legacygames.com/download_games/394/the_lost_cases_of_sherlock_holmes/) It features 16 cases wherein you investigate hundreds of potentially relevant clues and lively characters in each story. London locations are historically accurate. Or you can just buy the CD-ROM.



☛ NEXT ISSUE: A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA. Submit any and all things to do with this case, but don't let it stop you if you have something completely unrelated. We want your input!! ☛ FUTURE ISSUES: *The Red-Headed League; Weapons in the Canon; anything humorous for Special Issues.*

### Sherlock Holmes & the Heir of Albion

*Type of material:* Trade Paperback *Publisher:* Xiphos Books, Bangor, Northern Ireland *Year:* 2007 *Author:* Ronan Coghlan

This book is, at less than 200 pages, a short novel and it should be classed as a parody. As is so with any good parody, it is written as if it is entirely serious and it takes a while for the reader to notice the delicious, dry humor buried in the narrative. Perhaps a passage from "Chapter the Sixth" will illustrate this element. The narrator has been left to wait by Holmes and he says:

"I requested another pot of tea and began to think. I found it tiring, so stopped."

Circumstances have combined, in the Spring of 1900, to cause Watson to be away from Baker Street and Holmes recruits an innocent to replace him for a short while. This person, one Hector Wace, is introduced to other aspects of Holmes not described by the Good Doctor. Their first day clears up the matter of "The Giant Rat of Sumatra" and introduces Wace to Miss Junia Verney, the resident of 221A Baker Street, as well as to Holmes' newest client, Professor James Moriarty. Events rapidly spiral downward from there.

The ensuing jumble involves a varying number of sinister, interesting and otherwise describable characters in a scheme that involves world domination, royal blackmail, several Very Secret Societies and the Home Secretary, not necessarily in that order. If taken seriously, the narrative is real action-packed adventure in which Holmes saves the World (and, of course, England) from a Fate Worse than Death. If not taken seriously, it provides a number of amusing aspects, including verses set to the tune of "John Brown's Body" praising Mrs. Hudson's 'Spotted Dick' and a number of previously un-introduced associates in Holmes' investigations.

Needless to say, Holmes is successful and the Professor is cleared of any wrong-doing, but Holmes does manage to arrange(?) for him to be sentenced to an extremely distasteful (to Moriarty) fate. Love is triumphant, at least twice, and the villains are discommoded, mostly with Extreme Prejudice, as the saying goes. Don't pay too much attention to the action, but rather, as with Ernest Bramah's "Kai Lung" books, savor the nuances and the contrasts. There is a definite flavor of arch satire involved in this tale, which is probably best read, as it was written, over a pot of Guinness.

*Reviewed by:* Philip K. Jones; November, 2008.

### CALENDAR SHERLOCKIANA 2009

**January 8-11** - BSI Weekend, NYC

**January 9** - Baskerville Bash, NYC, [www.sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com](http://www.sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com)

**February 14** - 19th Annual Wessex Cup at Tampa Bay Downs. Contact David McCallister (see back page)

**April TBA** - Sherlockian Film Festival, Seminole Library

**April 18-19** - Gathering of Southern Sherlockians. Presentations by scions from Atlanta, Birmingham, Nashville and Greenville. Focus on *Hound of the Baskervilles*. Contact Kent Ross at

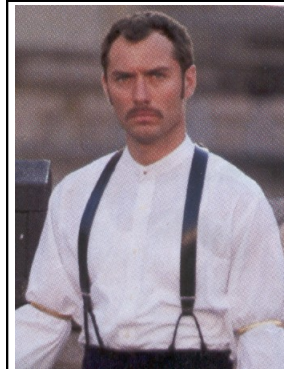
**May 15-17** - Sherlock Holmes/ACDoyle Symposium, Dayton, OH [chipsworth@fuse.net](mailto:chipsworth@fuse.net) or 513-681-5507

**May/June TBA** - 34th Annual Spring Gathering, Sarasota

**October 14** - Pre-Bouchercon Event: Doyle, Bouchercon, Fleming Must be an attendee of Convention (see next)

**October 15-18** - The 40th Bouchercon World Mystery Convention, Indianapolis, IN. [www.bouchercon2009.com](http://www.bouchercon2009.com)

### MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM/ by Mike Peters St. Petersburg Times 11/02/08



Jude Law, in the role of Watson to Robert Downey, Jr.'s Holmes.

For the Record:

**THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS**

David McCallister, Master of the House,

(Master of

Ceremonies at most gatherings, host of the annual Wessex Cup)

Carl Heifetz, Representative (both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople),

(Correspondent)

Wanda & Jeff Dow, The Papers on the Sundial,

(Communications and Bookkeeping)

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