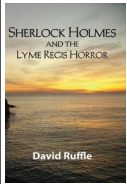




2010

Communication No. 298

The Pleasant Places of Florida



Sherlock Holmes and the Lyme Regis Horror

Type of material: Trade Paperback. Publisher: Fastprint Publishing, Peterborough, England Year: 2009 Author: David Ruffle

This apparent novel is actually a novelette and six short pieces related to the lead tale and a poem added at the end. The short pieces are mostly Sherlockian, with the first three told by Watson and the final three by anonymous narrators. They are actually fragments, with little or no resolution, but rather representative flights of fancy, meant to engage the reader's emotions.

The main story violates Holmes' dictum, that "no ghosts need apply." If that is overlooked, what is left is a lively and engaging tale about a picturesque village and time. The Watson telling the tale is one of the most engaging I have met. He has the loyalty, the manners and the honesty all Sherlockians have come to revere along with a knowing twinkle in his eye. Holmes is Holmes, a bit older than we are accustomed to, but with the keen eye and lack of pretense, inhibition or tact we all associate with him. The other characterizations in the story are well-done, producing sharp images and clear impressions.

The basic premise of the tale has a supernatural element that is alien to the Canon, with no scientific justification. It requires a 'willing suspension of disbelief' and it strained my reserves of such disbelief. However, if we can gloss over and forget Doyle's descent into Spiritualism, we can surely forgive The Master a reaction to events that reach beyond the science of his time and place. It is evident that Holmes reacts reasonably and effectively to the circumstances he faces. The question is whether those circumstances could ever occur. "Further deponent sayeth not."

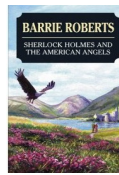
The short pieces are interesting and varied. They are, in fact, incomplete as a group and create a feeling that more should have been said. Perhaps the author will expand on one or more in future.

The result of reading this book is a desire to

visit Lyme Regis and a hope to see more of this comforting Watson, who is just what one always felt Watson should be.

Copies are available through Amazon.com or directly from the author at lymelight53@aol.com.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, March, 2010.



Sherlock Holmes and the American Angels

Type of material: Hardcover. Publisher: Severn House Publishers Ltd. Year: 2007 Author: Barrie Roberts

This is the ninth and final Sherlockian novel by Barrie Roberts. That is, of course, unless my friend Andrew Gulli has another tucked away somewhere. Nine novels and eight short stories is a regrettably small output from so talented a writer as Mr. Roberts. In my opinion, he had a knack for capturing Dr. Watson in his tales in very much the same way as he appears in the Canon. Others will surely disagree, but most will concede Roberts had the gift of storytelling and an ear for Sherlockian dialogue.

Angels is an odd tale, as are most of Barrie's novels. Holmes notes a set of coded messages in the newspapers, solves the code and learns of a scheduled meeting between the two carrying on the conversation. He and Watson decide to observe this meeting and, instead, find a dead body. Shortly, another corpse is found and it appears that both the correspondents have been killed by yet another party. As things progress, Holmes acquires a client, the venue moves to far rural Scotland and the politics of the situation become very complicated.

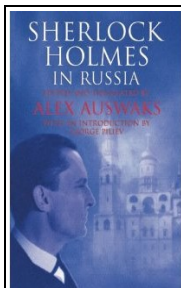
The *Angels* of the title are found to be gold coins, minted by Bonnie Prince Charlie and the passel of rogues chasing them includes Americans, Scotsmen and Irish, all muddled up together. A murder method unique to the Inuit is put to use and stones placed by the aboriginal inhabitants of Western Europe provide a solution to a mystery. Holmes and Watson alternately chase and are chased, the list of suspects grows and shrinks with surprising regularity and the police provide good comic relief.

The resolution of the mystery is typical of Roberts. Holmes clears all the mystery away and everything is explained, in some detail. This is, to my mind, the weak point in Roberts' writing, no loose ends are left to dangle and everything is explained. I have never found



this to be true in real life and I suspect it in a mystery. It is permissible, perhaps, in shorter stories, but novel-length tales should have some room for the unexpected and the unexplained. Such things occur daily, to all of us.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones; March, 2010.



Sherlock Holmes in Russia

Type of material: Hardcover. Publisher: Robert Hale Ltd. Year: 2008 Author: Alex Auswaks

The *Introduction*, by George Piliev, explains the spurt in popularity of Sherlock Holmes tales in Russia in the first quarter of the 20th Century. Poor communications, translation problems and difficult legal barriers slowed publication of Doyle's works in Russia to the point that it failed to satisfy the clamoring of the 'Reading Public,' which even included the Imperial family. The slow translation of Doyle's works, in conjunction with the exploding popularity of Holmes led to maniacal inclusion of Holmes in advertisements, plays, children's tales and all elements of cultural life. The 'Superstar' phenomenon came early to Russia. In place of translations of Doyle's tales, a number of home-grown authors met the spiraling demand for Sherlockian stories, creating a Literary 'bloom' of indigenous Sherlockian tales.

Similar 'blooms' have occurred in Danish, German, Chinese and East Indian literature at various times in the last Century. This book contains a selection of seven tales from this Russian Literary 'Bloom' by two different authors. The selection in this volume was made carefully by the editor/translator, with an eye toward showing off the best of the lot and displaying the characteristics most common to the Literature as a whole.

The first two stories are by P. Orlovetz (details unknown) and give the commonly used rationalization for the presence of Holmes and Watson in Russia, an extended vacation. These tales are barely readable, especially to anyone familiar with the Canon. The plots are minor and lacking in any real logic and the characterizations are unrecognizable. The only strengths in these tale are in their presentation of conditions in Czarist Russia.

The final five tales, credited to P. Nikitin (again, details unknown), are a definite step up in quality. There are marked improvements in plotting and some of the characters are well-drawn and interesting. Further, the events include happenings that were typical of the times and settings. Each is

a reasonably entertaining mystery, set in a lively and exotic land with interesting persons and events.

The real problem is that none of those persons are Sherlock Holmes or Dr. Watson. Their names are used but nothing much else is familiar. In a couple of the later tales, the hero makes a few sensible inferences from clues and local knowledge, but the instance of Holmes on 'observation' is not present. The detective acts much as one would expect a Pinkerton agent to function; systematic, careful, sensible, but there are no flashes of insight and no deductions worth observing.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones; March, 2010.

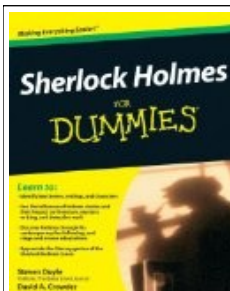
Brad Pitt's 'Sherlock Holmes' Chances

4/15/10 MTV Movies Blog — Josh Wigler

Sherlock Holmes 2 screenwriters Michele and Kieran Mulrone have commented on the long-standing rumors of Brad Pitt playing Professor Moriarty in the sequel. "We're gigantic Brad Pitt fans," said Michele. "I



think he's a brilliant actor and a particularly brilliant character actor. And certainly the role that you're talking about of Professor Moriarty is a big character to bite off. I hope Brad likes it. Let's leave it at that."



It's elementary! Sherlock Holmes is a classic character who has fascinated readers for decades, and now this indispensable guide explores the enduring detective's stories like never before. Discover the rich characters, recurring themes, and social context of Arthur Conan Doyle's tales; the influence of Holmes on literature and pop culture; and why his stories still offer endless and fascinating new discoveries to readers.

See where it all began — meet Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the man who created the world's greatest detective, and learn about Victorian London, where the Holmes stories take place

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Experience Holmes today — from the ever-expanding network of worldwide fans to story locations that fans can visit, discover how the character continues to resonate with so many devoted followers. Available at Amazon.com \$13.59



The registration form for the conference *The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes* is now posted online and can be downloaded for those interested in attending. The symposium will take place Aug. 6 - 8, 2010. The form is available on three sites. *The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes* website http://www.norwegianexplorers.org/2010_conference.html Scroll to the bottom of the information page and the form can be downloaded. *The Norwegian Explorers* website - <http://www.norwegianexplorers.org> *The University of Minnesota Sherlock Holmes Collections* page <http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/holmes.phtml> This site gives information about the Collections and has a link to the brochure. Or, you can access the form directly at <http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/holmes/2010brochure.pdf> We hope to see many of you here in Minnesota this August.

CALENDAR SHERLOCKIANA

- 23-25 April** *STUB/Watsonian Weekend* Friday Dinner & Sunday brunch at Sheraton Four Points, 51st running of Chicago Silver Blaze at Hawthorne Race Course
- 30 April—2 May** *Malice Domestic XXII* Arlington, VA. www.malicedomestic.org
- 14-16 May** Dayton Symposium, *Investigating the American Canon*. Contact
- 15 May** The Pleasant Places of Florida's *35th Spring Gathering* at the Rose & Crown in Largo. See flyer.
- 24 May—6 June** *The Baskerville Beast*, a musical by Teddy Hayes, The Rose Theatre, Bankside. See www.rosetheatre.org.uk for details.
- 13-14 October** *The Friends of Arthur Conan Doyle Collection Symposium* in Toronto.
- 14-17 October** *Buchercon XLI*, San Francisco, CA. www.bcon2010.com

HE'S EVERYWHERE... In this case, on your finger:



http://www.philosophersguild.com/index.lasso?page_mode=Product_Detail&item=0596 or <http://tinyurl.com/y4fr4ws> ... we've heard good things about the *Baker Street Blog* at <http://www.bakerstreetblog.com/2010/04/womans-quick-intuition-bosc.html> .



BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG

The Canadian Library Assoc. Book of the Year for Children Award named as one of its Honour Books this year *Vanishing Girl* by Shane Peacock.

Vanishing Girl is Shane Peacock's third book in The Boy Sherlock Holmes series. Preceded by *Eye of the Crow* (2007) and *Death in the Air* (2008), the fabulously well-paced *Vanishing Girl* finds a young Sherlock attempting to help locate the missing 14-year-old daughter of Lord and Lady Rathbone. Still under the tutelage of Sigerson Bell, the apothecary, Sherlock continues to develop his amazing skills of detection. But, brilliantly advanced by Peacock, it is Sherlock's exploration of his motivations, particularly those revolving around the lovely Irene Doyle, nasty Malefactor and the pompous policeman, Lestrade, that help him solve the mystery.



COMING IN MAY! BOOK 4! It is 1868, the week that Benjamin Disraeli becomes Prime Minister of the Empire. Sherlock's beautiful but poor admirer, Beatrice, the hatter's daughter, appears at the door late at night. She is terrified, claiming that she and her friend have just been attacked by the Spring Heeled Jack on Westminster Bridge.

There's news and info about the world of Holmes with lots of links to other great Sherlockian resources on the web... May 15 is the deadline for teachers, librarians, societies and others to apply for its funding project, the Jan Stauber Grant. It provides up to \$250 to fund the development of a project that will introduce young people to Holmes. More info and an application are available on the Beacon website. www.beaconsociety.com ... In Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*, there is a reference: "London fog," said Hunter. "But they stopped years ago, didn't they? Clean Air Act, smokeless fuels, all that?" Richard found himself remembering that Sherlock Holmes books of his childhood. ... In the play *Drop Dead*, a character, Dick Shalit is described as "Inspector Mounds enters from the archway. He wears a tweed Sherlock Holmes coat and cape, a deerstalker hat, and smokes a large pipe." In case you're wondering, it's actually a humorous play and the character is SUPPOSED to be a cliché' ... Robert Downey Jr. won a Golden Globe for his portrayal in the latest *Sherlock Holmes* ... The complete Japanese animated series *Sherlock Hound* is available from <http://hmv.com> ... Sherlock Holmes chess pieces available from Chesshouse.com for only \$292.50 ...



35th Spring Gathering of "The Pleasant Places of Florida"

A Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars - A Society of Sherlock Holmes Readers, Collectors, Enthusiasts
VISITORS AND INQUIRERS WELCOME!



Saturday, May 15, 2010, 11:30 am

Rose & Crown • 12850 Walsingham Road, Largo, Florida

Featured Adventure: "The Bruce-Partington Plans"

Attendees are asked to read this Sherlock Holmes Adventure in preparation for the Gathering



The dense London fog sets the scene for "The Bruce-Partington Plans."
From *Collier's Weekly* (Dec. 12, 1908), illustrated by Frederic Dorr Steele

Enjoy a Hearty Luncheon at One of Tampa Bay's Best British Pubs

Accompanied by

PPoFF Customary Rituals • Toasts • Good Fellowship • Vigorous Sherlockian Repartee

Registration \$5.00 Per Person • Order from the menu according to your appetite

Name(s): _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____

I wish to: make a toast read a paper make a presentation
Registration: \$ _____ Optional Donation to the Marshall/Wood Fund*: \$ _____ Total: \$ _____

Kindly post registration and remittance to: Wanda Dow •

*Funding the purchase and distribution of Sherlock Holmes books to Tampa Bay area libraries and schools.

DIRECTIONS TO THE ROSE & CROWN
12850 Walsingham Road, Largo, FL 33785
727- 593-7673

From the north:

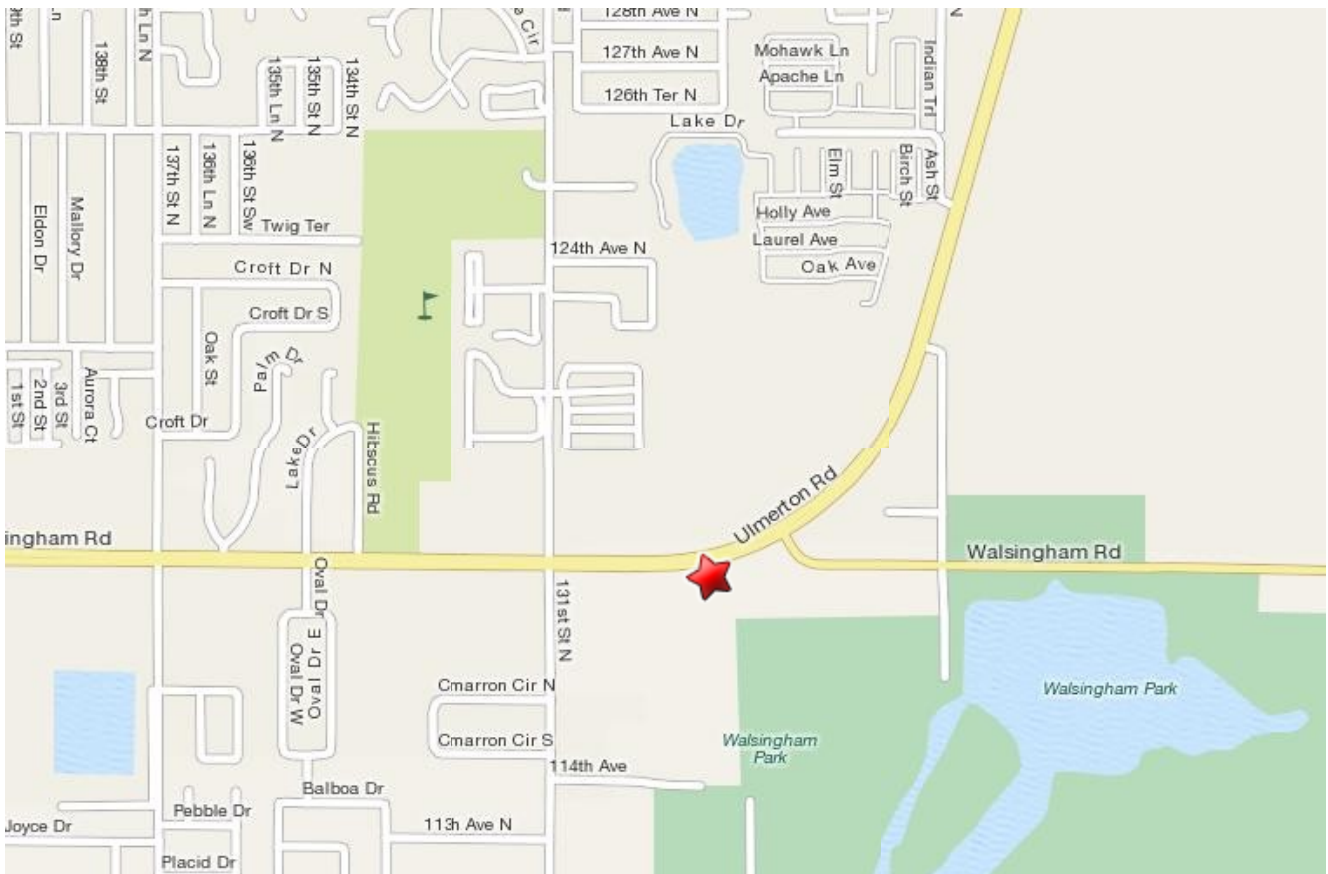
- Take U.S. 19 south to Ulmerton Road/State Road 688.
- Turn right onto Ulmerton Road westbound.
- Continue on Ulmerton Road/State Road 688 westbound for approximately 6 miles. Ulmerton eventually feeds into Walsingham Road after a long curve to the left (south).
Rose & Crown will be on left.

From the south:

- Take U.S. 19 north to Ulmerton Road/State Road 688.
- Turn left onto Ulmerton Road/State Road 688 westbound.
- Continue on Ulmerton Road/State Road 688 for approximately 6 miles. Ulmerton eventually feeds into Walsingham Road after a long curve to the left (south).
Rose & Crown will be on left.

From the east:

- Take Interstate 275 west, crossing Tampa Bay via the Howard Franklin Bridge.
- After the bridge take Exit 31. This exit puts you on Ulmerton Road/State Road 688 westbound.
- Continue westbound on Ulmerton Road/State Road 688 for approximately 10 miles. Ulmerton eventually feeds into Walsingham Road after a long curve to the left (south).
Rose & Crown will be on left



For the Record:

THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS

David McCallister, Master of the House,
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)

(Master of Ceremonies at

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