

## Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia

### The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes Adventure XIX -- The Adventure of the Gloria Scott

#### SUMMARY (Diogenes Club)

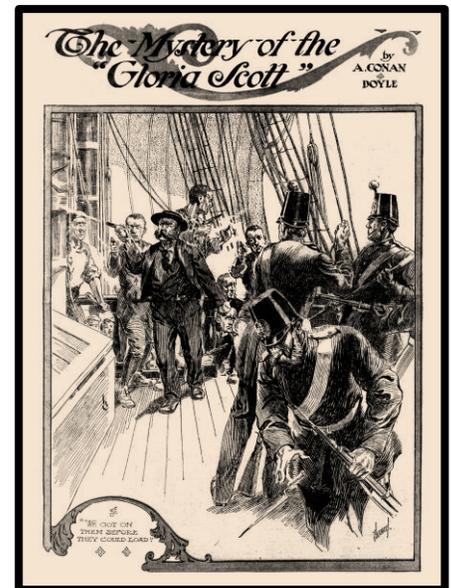
In his youth, Armitage, who was a bank employee, embezzled money to pay a debt of honor and was detected before he could replace it. He was convicted and sentenced to penal servitude in Australia. He was being transported there on the bark, Gloria Scott. The prisoner on one side of him was Evans, a forger, and on the other side Jack Prendergast, who had defrauded a group of rich merchants out of £750,000 – and had not surrendered it.

Prendergast's partner, Wilson, had obtained the position of ship's parson and had bribed the crewmen. Wilson also supplied the convicts with pistols, powder and files (for their irons).

A mutiny was successful. After it was over, a disagreement arose about what to do about the surviving crewmen. Prendergast wanted to kill them all to completely cover their tracks but some of the mutineers, including Armitage and Evans refused to go along with this, not wanting murder on their conscience. Prendergast allowed the dissenting mutineers to be set adrift in an open boat before proceeding with the slaughter of the soldiers and crewmen.

Shortly after they were adrift, the Gloria Scott exploded. The dissenters rowed back to check for survivors and only found one, Hudson, whom they took onto their boat. They were soon picked up by the Hotspur, bound for Australia and they posed as flotsam from a passenger ship. The Admiralty considered the Gloria Scott lost at sea.

Once in Australia, they changed their names, went to the gold fields, became wealthy and returned to England where they lived quiet lives in the country for almost 30 years until Hudson showed up at Trevor's and



began to blackmail him. He then went to do the same thing to Beddoes who would have none of it, so Hudson told the police.

When he learned that Hudson had told all, Senior Trevor had a stroke and died.

Victor became a tea planter in Terai and prospered. Neither Beddoes nor Hudson was ever seen again and Holmes concluded that Beddoes had killed Hudson and fled the country with all the money he could get his hands on.

### **SUMMARY (ACD Encyclopedia)**

Sherlock Holmes tells Watson his very first case when he was still a student. He was invited by his friend Victor Trevor for a month vacation in his father's house in Donnithorpe, Norfolk. At the end of the sojourn, an old and strange acquaintance of old Trevor named Hudson comes for a visit, but Holmes has to return to London.

Two months later, Victor implored him to come back. Hudson seemed to have a very bad influence on old Trevor. His health was so bad that he died when Holmes arrived. Before dying the father told his son he wrote the story of what happened in his earlier life which would explain the current situation.

In fact, Trevor's real name was Armitage. In 1855 when he was 23, he robbed a bank and was arrested and sent on board the Gloria Scott bound to Australia. During the trip, all the convicts organized a mutiny and took control of the boat, killing a lot of warders and sailors.

Some of the mutineers including Trevor decided to quit the boat on a small barque as they didn't want to kill more than needed. The others stayed on the Gloria Scott and killed the remaining witnesses. A few minutes later the Gloria Scott was blown off by a big explosion.

Only one survived, the sailor Hudson, who was pulled aboard the Trevor's barque. They were later saved by the brig Hotspur, bound for Australia. Trevor became rich with the diggings and he came back to England. Hudson was blackmailing the survivors...

When Trevor died Hudson went to Beddoes' house but both disappeared. Holmes thinks Beddoes killed Hudson and fled from the country.

### **SUMMARY (Wikipedia)**

In his university days, Holmes spent a month with his friend, Victor Trevor, at Victor's father's estate in Norfolk. While there, Holmes amazed his host, Victor's father, who was a Justice of the Peace and a landowner. He had made his fortune in the goldfields in Australia. One of Holmes's deductions was that the elder Mr. Trevor was once connected with someone with the initials "J. A." whom he wanted to forget. His

host then passed out on the table. Holmes had touched a sore spot, and possibly did not believe the old man's explanation once he had come back to himself that J. A. had been an old lover.

Holmes perceived that he was making his host uncomfortable and decided to take his leave. The evening before he did this, another old man suddenly appeared at the house causing the elder Mr. Trevor to rush for a shot of brandy before greeting him. They had apparently been shipmates some 30 years earlier, and Mr. Trevor said something about finding him some work. Soon afterwards, Holmes and his friend found Mr. Trevor drunk.

Holmes then left the Trevor estate and spent the next seven weeks at his chemistry experiments, suddenly receiving a telegram from the younger Trevor begging him to come back to Norfolk. Once he got there, Victor told Holmes that his father was dying as a result of a stroke suffered after he received a letter. They found that he had died while Victor had been meeting Holmes at the station.

After Holmes had left the house seven weeks earlier, it seems that this old man who had come looking for work, and whose name was Hudson, proved to be as unruly an employee as could be imagined. He had demanded to be promoted from gardener to butler and had got what he wanted. He had taken unforgivable liberties which would normally have resulted in an employee's dismissal. He was often drunk. Victor could not stand him and would have beaten Hudson up if he had been younger. The other staff had complained about him. However, Victor's father always let him get away with any infamy. Suddenly, Hudson announced that he was leaving because he had tired of Norfolk, and he was going to Hampshire to see Beddoes, another old shipmate.

Now, Holmes's friend had become thin and careworn by the ordeal. He had thought that the trouble was over when Hudson had left, but then came the letter, from Fordingbridge in Hampshire. It read:

"The supply of game for London is going steadily up. Head-keeper Hudson, we believe, has been now told to receive all orders for fly-paper and for preservation of your hen pheasant's life."

It meant nothing to Victor, and it was quite a while before Holmes saw anything in it. He found the key. If one read every third word beginning with the first, there was an intelligible message: "The game is up. Hudson has told all. Fly for your life."

Holmes had deduced that the game was blackmail. Some guilty secret had been the power that Hudson had held over the elder Mr. Trevor. The old man's dying words to his doctor unlocked the secret. Some papers were found in Mr. Trevor's Japanese cabinet.

The document was a confession. The elder Mr. Trevor had once borne the name James Armitage (initials: J. A.) and had been a criminal having embezzled money from the bank where he worked and been caught. He was sentenced to transportation.

Once on the ship, the Gloria Scott, bound for Australia from Falmouth, Armitage found out from a neighbouring prisoner that there was a conspiracy to take over the ship. The neighbour, Jack Prendergast, had financed the scheme out of the nearly £250,000 in unrecovered money from his crime. Many of the crew, even officers, were in his employ, and even the chaplain Wilson, who was not truly a clergyman at all. Wilson, while pretending to minister to the prisoners, was actually furnishing them with pistols and other equipment to be used when the time was right. Armitage also drew his other neighbour, Evans, into the scheme.

As might be expected, all did not go as planned. The takeover was accomplished unexpectedly when the ship's doctor discovered a pistol while treating a prisoner. The prisoners then had to make their move right away or they would lose the element of surprise. In the ensuing mêlée, the Captain and many other men were killed, and there arose a dispute between Prendergast with his supporters and a group including Armitage over what to do with the few loyal crewmen still left alive. Armitage and others would not stand for cold-blooded murder. They were cast adrift in a small boat to make their way as they would.

Shortly after leaving in their small boat, the Gloria Scott blew up as the result of the violence spreading to where the gunpowder was kept. The men in the small boat, among whom was also Evans, hurried back to the site and rescued one survivor—Hudson.

The next day, as luck would have it, the men were rescued by another ship, the Hotspur, also bound for Australia. They passed themselves off as survivors from a passenger ship and once in Australia, headed for the goldfields. Armitage changed his name to Trevor, and Evans changed his name to Beddoes. Both later returned to England as rich men.

All had gone well until Hudson had suddenly shown up.

Since no scandal involving the Gloria Scott ever followed the odd message from Beddoes (Evans), and since neither Hudson nor Evans was ever heard from again, the Police believed Hudson had done away with Beddoes while Holmes believed that Evans had likely killed Hudson, believing that he had told all, when in fact he had not, and then fled with as much money as he could lay his hands on.

The case is referenced by Holmes once more in "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire" when Holmes consults an index of his past exploits for references to "vampires" and remarks on "the Voyage of the Gloria Scott" listed under "V". It is also mentioned in passing in "The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual" as Holmes recounts to Watson his early cases when he first became a detective.