



The Return of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XXXIV – The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton

Psssst! Wanna buy a compromising letter? Read *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton* this weekend, and **then** answer that question. While you're at it, give some thought to the following questions, and comments, as you turn the pages:

Why was Holmes out rambling with Watson at the beginning of this story, deliberately missing the appointment he'd made with Milverton?

Milverton paid a lot of money for the letters he acquired. How might a Victorian Era blackmailer know he's buying a genuine article and not a forgery? If I sold Milverton a bogus document, was his the sort of character who would seek revenge?

Why the explicit religious imagery in this story? We've got the Evil One/snake (Milverton), Eve (Lady Eva), and Sts. George/Margaret (Sherlock Holmes) tilting with the dragon (safe).

Why does Holmes become so infuriated when the topic of blackmail comes up? We seldom see him get this worked up.

My favorite moment of levity in the entire canon takes place near the end of CHAS, when Lestrade ticks off the particulars of the suspect who got away and Holmes exclaims, "Why, it might be a description of Watson!"



It's exactly timed to break the reader's tension — and this is a tense story, isn't it? I can't help but hear Watson's unchronicled gasp in response! And then the tension returns right away when they stand outside the window looking at the shooter's picture. It's very oppressive, but a consistent favorite nevertheless.

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