



The Return of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XXXVI -- The Adventure of the Three Students

All I could remember about this one was that it had something to do with pencils, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

Mr Hilton Soames, a tutor and lecturer at an unspecified university, comes to see Holmes in the hope that he can find out which of three students could have gained access to his room and copied a Greek passage which was to be translated as part of an exam.

Holmes and Watson happened to be staying at the university town due to other business and this is just the sort of strange little problem Holmes loves to solve – no actual crime, no reward, no celebrity client, just a situation which is beyond everyone else and seemingly impossible.

This provides the perfect opportunity for him to show off and apply his unique skills.

Once in the lecturer's room, Holmes finds pencil sharpenings and from this can determine the maker and the size. There is also a curious lump of clay with sawdust shavings mixed in. He finds a second one in the bedroom and it becomes clear that the person hid in there when the lecturer came back unexpectedly.

To cut a rather long story short the culprit is the sport student and the clay was from the long jump pit. The spikes on his shoes and his natural height allowed him to see into the room and noticed the exam papers on the table.



This is one of my husband's favourite stories but I'm not so keen and I don't really know why. There is plenty of that clever deduction we all love but it just doesn't capture me for some reason. Perhaps it is because Holmes is grumpy again – Watson tells us that he is agitated being away from Baker Street and his messy rooms with all his paraphernalia inside. He doesn't really include Watson in the investigation at all going off alone to pursue his ideas instead and even says: "Not one of your cases, Watson – mental, not physical".

This seems rather unfair and disappointing considering how close they have become lately – 6 out of 10.

Charlotte Anne Walters

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