



The Return of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XXXIX – The Adventure of the Abbey Grange

Lock up the dog, hide your hatpins, and mind the decanters....welcome to our next story, *The Adventure of the Abbey Grange*. My weekly questions and comments as you settle in to read this tale of love and hatred...

Have you ever seen so many stupid men in one story? Lady Brackenstall could've told the male investigators anything at all and they would have believed her, no questions asked. It took a thinking **machine** to see through her lies, and even he had to make two trips to Abbey Grange to do so. A sensible female detective like Miss Marple would have been impervious to Lady B's charms and solved this case in no time flat.

"A curse upon the land" was called down upon England for its stringent divorce laws. Would it have been possible for Lady Brackenstall to flee to her native Australia and divorce Sir Eustace in a court there?

Bent pokers, bell ropes, bruised women, exotic Indian animals in conjunction with the bad guy's corpse — there are many intersecting points between ABBE and SPEC. Does ABBE offer a possible sequel to SPEC? Might Helen's finance, Percy, have rescued her after all, as Crocker rescued his beloved Mary Fraser?



“Except for releasing the lady I will see that everything is kept exactly as I have found it, but I beg you not to lose an instant, as it is difficult to leave Sir Eustace there.” Hopkins knows just how to hook Sherlock Holmes with his wonderful exercise in creative telegraphy. Would Holmes have responded at all to a simple message like “Help! Murder!”?

Lady Brackenstall gives some readers the creeps, and I’m one of them. She was hell-bent to marry money and a title. She’s a cool liar. There’s no proof she really loves Crocker. What really clinches it for me, though, is the thought of her wandering around the house at night in that black sequined dress — if I’m not mistaken, the only time sequins are mentioned in the canon. Today sequins are made of plastic. In those days, different materials were used. I don’t know about the particular dress Lady Brackenstall wore that night, but it calls to mind a Worth gown I read about in a fashion history book. The sequins on that c.1880’s dress were made from (shudder) insects, specifically the glossy bodies of beetles. Art in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms, isn’t it? Before her marriage, Madame Worth, after all, was Mademoiselle Vernet!

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