



## The Return of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure XL – The Adventure of the Second Stain

1. Was it in character for Holmes to be hateful of notoriety?
2. To whom, and why, had Watson promised publication of this case?
3. Is “vague in certain details” precise?
4. Why was the initial meeting at 221B?
5. Should Mycroft have been consulted?
6. What true facts underlie fictions in this case?
7. Was Trelawney Hope’s “beauty of mind” demonstrated or was he just a likable bumbling “yes” man?
8. What was the motive of those who sought the letter?
9. What was so unsafe about the office safe?
10. Compare curtain time in this adventure and *The Sign of the Four*.
11. Does the case fit the international situation of the time?
12. Did officials open their own mail?
13. Wouldn’t some of the chancelleries wish the letter suppressed?
14. Couldn’t Holmes trace Lucas’ informant?
15. Did Holmes share the popular belief in the rarity of coincidence?
16. Could Lady Hilda have had a legitimate excuse for visiting 221B?
17. Why is “alibi” italicized?



18. Why was there no relief for the constable?
19. What ever happened to Lucas' spy who almost caused a war?
20. How familiar does Holmes appear to be with Watson's accounts of his cases? What does his opinion of them suggest to us about Holmes' professional attitude to what he calls "the whole art of detection"?
21. Is there anything in Lady Brackenstall's statement to Holmes and Stanley Hopkins that you consider to be singular? If so, what does this suggest?
22. What do the three wine glasses suggest to Holmes? Can you think of any alternative explanation for the "beeswing" being present in only one glass?
23. What assumptions about the reader's general knowledge of world events must the author of this narrative have made? Do you think such assumptions were justified?
24. What view of justice is demonstrated by Holmes' actions in this story? Has this view of his changed during his career?
25. There seem to be some echoes of past cases in this story. Find as many as you can which can be considered traditions of the genre and which earlier cases are called to mind?

**Ralph Edwards, BSI**

**May 26, 1995 / January 15, 1994**