



His Last Bow

Adventure XLIV -- The Adventure of the Red Circle

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Time frame of story (known/surmised):

Winter. No other indications. To us, it sounds like an earlier Holmes rather than a later Holmes.

Holmes & Watson living arrangements:

Sharing quarters at 221B.

Opening scene:

Mrs. Warren, a landlady, has arrived, and tells Holmes of her concerns regarding a tenant with peculiar habits.A

Client:

Mr. Warren, the landlady.

Crime or concern:

The tenant paid double, asked for absolute privacy, and was never seen by Mrs. Warren after the initial contact. Constantly paced the room nervously. Then two weeks later, Mrs. Warren's husband was abducted and released without harm. Holmes & Watson later peeked at the lodger, and determined it was a woman.



Villain:

Giuseppe Gorgiano, an Italian criminal. He was a leader of the Red Circle, a Neapolitan society which was allied to the old Carbonari, an organization of Italian criminals, which Mrs. Warren's tenant's husband, Gennaro, had innocently joined years earlier. Gorgiano tried to force Gennaro to kill his friend and benefactor and had assaulted Gennaro's wife, but the couple fled to England instead.

Motive:

Gennaro was hunted down, but then killed Gorgiano in self defense while trying to send a coded warning signal to his wife.

Logic used to solve:

Clues from the agony columns: "Be patient. Will find some sure means of communication. Meanwhile, this column. G." That was two days after Mrs. Warren's lodger arrived. Three days later: "Am making successful arrangements. Patience and prudence. The clouds will pass. G." A week later, and a day before the client called: "The path is clearing. If I find chance signal message remember code agreed — one A, two B, and so on. You will hear soon. G." Two days later: "High red house with white stone facings. Third floor. Second window left. After dusk. G."

A stake-out of the lodger revealed it was a woman, not not the man who had rented the room. The woman was tall and beautiful.

Holmes viewed the window and read the coded message. It was warned of danger, in Italian, and was interrupted. The interruption was indicative of some devilry going forward.

Policemen:

When Holmes & Watson went to the building where Gennaro had been hiding, they found Inspector Gregson in company with an American Pinkerton detective, Mr. Leverton.

Holmes' fees:

It is art for art's sake, Watson. I suppose when you doctored you found yourself studying cases without thought of a fee?" "For my education, Holmes."

"Education never ends, Watson. It is a series of lessons with the greatest for the last. This is an instructive case. There is neither money nor credit in it, and yet one would wish to tidy it up."

Transport:

Holmes & Watson came round in time to client's house, by unspecified means. Later when they returned. the gloom of a London winter evening had thickened into one gray curtain, a dead monotone of colour.

Food:

The client's mysterious lodger usually had lunch about 1:00.

Drink:

None mentioned.

Vices:

The mysterious lodger, who turned out to be a woman, smoked cigarettes in her quarters.

Other cases mentioned:

A simple matter in which Holmes brought light into the darkness and arranged an affair for Mr. Fairdale Hobbs, who was one of Mrs. Warren's lodgers.

The Long Island cave mystery, of which Mr. Leverton, the Pinkerton, was the hero.

Notable Quotables:

"(She) had the pertinacity and also the cunning of her sex." – Holmes

I'll do you this justice, Mr. Holmes, that I was never in a case yet that I didn't feel stronger for having you on my side. – Gregson

Other interesting:

Once more, Watson is described as having a moustache: "Watson, even your modest moustache would have been singled." -Holmes

Client's husband had a job as a timekeeper at Morton and Waylight's, in the neighbourhood where Henry Baker lost his hat and goose.

"Education, Gregson, education. Still seeking knowledge at the old university." – Holmes

When all was said and done:

Gorgiano had been a devil and a monster. He was a giant, and everything about him was grotesque, gigantic, and terrifying. He had trailed Gennaro and his wife to England, but his revenge scheme did not work out. He was killed by Gennaro instead

Later, after the case was resolved, it was not yet eight o'clock, and a Wagner night at Covent Garden. Holmes & Watson hurried, to be in time for the second act.

McMurdo's Camp