



## His Last Bow

### Adventure XLVI – The Adventure of the Dying Detective

#### Publishing History

# 46 of the 60 stories

First published in *The Strand Magazine*, December, 1913

In the US *Collier's Weekly*, November 22, 1913

Part of *His Last Bow* collection by

John Murray, London, 1917

George H. Doran, New York, 1927

British Illustrator – Walter Paget

American illustrator – Lee Conrey



#### Chronology

Baring-Gould places the date of the story at November 19, 1887 making it 14<sup>th</sup> of the 60. This means that Holmes is 43 and Watson 45.

#### Christopher Morley Says

“Holmes pretense that he was dying of a fatal and rare disease, the “black Formosa corruption,” was a notable piece of acting and make lifelike (or deathlike) with theatrical effects. It deceived both Mrs. Hudson and the anxious Watson; why the performance was necessary is for the reader to learn. After three days of fasting Holmes was eager for a liberal meal at Simpson’s famous chophouse.”

## **Dummies Short Summary**

“Sherlock Holmes is dying! Having contracted a deadly infectious disease while working on a case, the Great Detective is feverish and delirious. He sends Watson to summon the only man in London who can cure him. But will he come?”

## **How Many Words**

At 5,823 words DYIN has the 4<sup>th</sup> most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 is NAVL – 12,701)

## **Classifying This Case**

This case is one of 23 classified as a MURDER and one of 14 where the perpetrator was either killed, arrested, or otherwise satisfactorily handled.

## **The Best Of Sherlock Holmes**

- 1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle did not have it on his list of 12 favorites.
- 1959 – The Baker Street Irregulars did not have it on their list of 10 favorites.
- 1999 – The Baker Street Irregulars votes it 27<sup>th</sup> of the 56 short stories.
- 1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 26<sup>th</sup> of the 56 short story.

## **What Else Happened That Year (1887)**

- Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
- Uprising on India's Northwest Frontier.
- First Women's Institute in the world; established at Stoney Creek, Canada.
- Sir Henry Tate presents the Tate Gallery to the nation.
- Employers' Liability Act: responsibility for injuries to and compensation of employees injured at work.
- Royal Automobile Club, London.
- Trained nurses only to be employed in hospitals.
- Dreyfus affair.
- Universal suffrage introduced in Austria.
- H.G. Wells publishes *The Invisible Man*.
- Roistand publishes *Cyrano de Bergerac*.
- Paul Dukas debuts *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.
- Gauguin paints *Girls Bathing in Tahiti*.

- Aspirin marketed.
- J. McCreary patents an air-washer intended to purify air in a building; beginning of air-conditioning.
- Diesel engine invented.
- Sir Ronald Ross, bacteriologist, identifies the causes of malaria and studies the disease.
- Beginning of Monotype system of typesetting.
- S.A. Andre is killed attempting to explore the polar regions in a free-flying balloon.

### **Holmes And Watson – Personal Information**

Holmes is in residence at 221B. Watson was living elsewhere in the second year of married life.

### **Dramatis Personae**

- **Mr. Culverton Smith**, a planter from Sumatra
- **Victor Savage**, nephew of Culverton Smith
- **Staples**, Culverton Smith's butler
- **Inspector Morton**
- **Sir Jasper Meeks** \
- **Penrose Fisher** } -- 3 physicians Watson suggests to Holmes
- **Ainstree** /

### **Quotable Sherlock**

- (Watson) Mrs. Hudson, the landlady of Sherlock Holmes, was a longsuffering woman.
- (Mrs Hudson) "He's dying, Dr. Watson," said she. "For three days he has been sinking, and I doubt if he will last the day. He would not let me get a doctor.
- "Well, Watson, we seem to have fallen upon evil days."
- "If you approach me, Watson, I shall order you out of the house."
- "Because it is my desire." Is that not enough?"
- (Watson) "Holmes, you are not yourself. A sick man is but a child, and so I will treat you."
- "I am somewhat exhausted: I wonder how a battery feels when it pours electricity into a non-conductor."
- "You fidget me beyond endurance. You, a doctor – you are enough to drive a patient into an asylum."
- "Indeed, I can not think why the whole bed of the ocean is not one solid mass of oysters, so prolific the creatures seem."

- “You and I, Watson, we have done our part. Shall the world, then, be overrun by oysters? No, no; horrible!”
- “But I have reasons to suppose that this opinion would be very much more frank and valuable if he imagines that we are alone.”
- "The best way of successfully acting a part is to be it," said Holmes.”
- “I give you my word that for three days I have tasted neither food nor drink until you were good enough to pour me out that glass of water. But it is the tobacco which I find most irksome.”
- “Among your many talents dissimulation finds no place.”
- “Three days of absolute fast does not improve one’s beauty, Watson.”
- “Malingering is a subject upon which I have sometimes thought of writing a monograph.”
- “My correspondence is a varied one and I am somewhat upon my guard against any packages which reach me.”
- “When we have finished at the police-station I think that something at Simpson’s would not be out of place.”

### **Holmes’ Fee**

No fee is mentioned in the story. (Of the fully recorded cases there are at least nine, REIG, BLAC, SIXN, GOLD, ABBE, CARD, DYIN, STUD, VALL, in which Holmes participated solely in order to assist the police...For Holmes there can have been little reward save the experience, and the privilege of paying his own expenses in following up on clues)

### **Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen**

- 1921 *The Dying Detective* with Eille Norwood as the first in his 47 movies. DYIN is in circulation.
- 1994 *The Dying Detective* with Jeremy Brett as an episode of his 43 story *Sherlock Holmes* series
- 1999 *The Adventure of the Deranged Detective* as an episode of *Sherlock Holmes in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century* (Animated TV series)

### **Annotated Sherlock**

- “a hectic fever” in one that is fluctuating but persistently recurrent.

## **Weapons**

We have one weapon only

- **Oriental Disease Culture** - Perfected by Culverton Smith in Sumatra, which he used to kill his nephew Victor Savage. He attempted to do the same to Holmes, who led him to believe that he had succeeded.

**Frank Mentzel**