



## The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure LI – The Adventure of the Creeping Man

It seemed to be a trivial matter: Mr. Trevor Bennett was concerned about the strange behavior of his employer, an eminent physiologist and professor at one of England's leading universities. In specific, the professor's faithful dog, a wolfhound named "Roy", had begun attacking his owner for no apparent reason. Further, the professor had suddenly become enamored of a fellow academic's daughter, a girl less than half his age. Bennett decided to contact Sherlock Holmes about the matter.

It's not widely known, but Professor Presbury nearly had a namesake in 3GAR, in which the original text had Prescott the counterfeiter named "Presbury." That is the case in the first UK and US appearances of 3GAR. At some later time, probably proximate to the publication of the "Casebook of Sherlock Holmes," someone changed "Presbury" to "Prescott" in 3GAR, and so it has remained ever since.

Holmes tells Watson, "I had hoped to have a longer chat with you before [Trevor Bennett] came." Yet in the preceding 35 minutes or so, Watson uttered a grand total of twenty-five words (twenty-six if you count "far-fetched" as two words). The first thirty minutes of the "chat" was conducted in complete silence, and in the remaining interval, Holmes spoke 349 words (350 if "twenty-four" is counted as two words). That's fourteen words by Holmes for every one spoken by Watson. Now, as Watson says, "...I was a whetstone for [Holmes's] mind." But which of Watson's paltry twenty-five words served to generate the "flame-like intuitions and impressions" of Holmes?



This story has sometimes been classified as an example of Doyle's science fiction, but I think it also has undertones of "Murders in the Rue Morgue." Doesn't the image of Professor Presbury clambering about on

the ivy on his house suggest the murderous orangutan in Poe's classic tale? And given the Professor's irascibility and irrationality, both enhanced by the langur serum, was Miss Edith Presbury in any real danger when her father peered in at her second-floor window?

What Canonical evidence is there to prove or disprove Holmes' assessment of dogs as a reflection of family life? Was this just anthropomorphism by Holmes? Speaking of Roy the wolfhound, if we assume that he was straining against his chain and collar, trying to get at his tormentor, how could the collar "slip?" And isn't it a bit odd that Roy had a collar that was the wrong size? One would think that the coachman, who had seen the Professor teasing the dog before, would have said something to someone.

Holmes describes the "firm" of Holmes & Watson as "a combination of the Busy Bee and Excelsior". The capitalization of "Busy Bee" and "Excelsior" makes me think that these may have been common brand names at the time this story was written (1923). Can someone shed some light on this, please?

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**June 04, 1999**