



The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure LVI – The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier

Publishing History

56 of the 60 stories

First published in *The Strand Magazine*, November, 1926

In the US *Liberty Magazine*, October 16, 1926

Part of *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes* collection

John Murray, London, 1927

George D. Doran, New York, 1927

British illustrator – Howard K. Elcock

Chronology

Baring-Gould places the dating of the story as Wednesday, July 7 to Monday, Jan 12, 1903 making it 55th of the 60. This means that Holmes is 49 and Watson 51.



Christopher Morley Says

"Sherlock himself writes this story, partly to show Watson how he thinks it ought to be done; and also because "the good Watson had at the time deserted me for a wife, the only selfish action I can recall in our association." It is presumed, however, that this was Watson's second selfishness. Holmes's own account of the pale-faced soldier is a grievous anticlimax; nothing else could have shown us how much he owed to Watson's charm as a writer."

Dummies Short Summary

“James Dodd wasn’t worried when he didn’t hear from his friend Godfrey for over six months. But when he’s told that Godfrey is taking a cruise around the world, he doesn’t buy it, especially when he sees Godfrey looking in his window at night. This is the first of two stories to be by Holmes instead of Watson.”

How Many Words

At 7,755 words BLAN has the 26th most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 is NAVL – 12,701)

Classifying This Case

This case is one of fear of persecution because of the fear of disease.

The Best Of Sherlock Holmes

BLAN is near the bottom of the pile on most lists.

- 1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle did not have it on his list of 12 favorites.
- 1959 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 57th of the 60 stories.
- 1999 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 53rd of the 56 short stories.
- 1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 55th of the 56 short stories.

What Else Happened That Year (1903)

Just for the heck of it, here is one item each month since I had a six page list

- **Jan 2nd** - Pres T Roosevelt shuts down post office in Indianola Miss, for refusing to accept its appointed postmistress because she was black
- **Jan 7th** - Start of Sherlock Holmes "Adventure of Blanched Soldier"
- **Jan Feb 22nd** - Due to drought the US side of Niagara Falls runs short of water
- **Feb 23rd** - The US and Cuba sign an agreement by which Cuba releases Guantanamo and Bahia Hondo to the US for naval stations
- **Mar 22nd** - Niagara Falls runs out of water because of a drought
- **Mar 23rd** - Wright brothers obtain airplane patent
- **Apr 14th** - Dr Harry Plotz discovers vaccine against typhoid (NYC)
- **Apr 20th** - 7th Boston Marathon won by John Lorden of Mass in 2:41:29.8
- **Apr 29th** - Limestone slides at Turtle Mountain kill 9 (Frank, Alberta) visits San Francisco

- **May 20th** - Britain's House of Commons begins a debate on the charges of poor administration and ill treatment of natives in Belgium's colony in the Congo Free State
- **May 29th** - May coup d'etat: Alexander Obrenovich, King of Serbia, and Queen Draga, are assassinated in Belgrade by the Black Hand (Crna Ruka) organization.
- **Jun 10th** - In Belgrade, Yugoslavia, a military coup d'etat- led by the Queen's brother-in-law and other offices - kills King Alexander I of Serbia, Queen Draga, and many officers
- **Jun 16th** - Pepsi Cola company forms
- **Jun 16th** - Roald Amundsen commences the first east-west navigation of the Northwest Passage by leaving Oslo, Norway.
- **Jul 1st** - 1st Tour de France bicycle race begins
- **Jul 17th** - The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party meets, first in Brussels and then London because their leaders have been forced into exile by the Russian Government
- **Aug 2nd** - Unsuccessful uprising of Macedonians against Turkey
- **Aug 4th** - Cardinal Giuseppe Sarto of Venice elected Pope Pius X
- **Sep 9th** - 6 km long Engadin-railroad tunnel of Switzerland inaugurated
- **Sep 15th** - Queen Wilhelmina calls railroad strikers "criminals"
- **Oct 1st** - 1st baseball World Series, Pittsburgh Pirates vs Boston Pilgrims (Red Sox)
- **Oct 10th** - The Women's Social and Political Union was formed by Emmeline Pankhurst to fight for women's rights in Britain.
- **Nov 3rd** - Colombia grants independence to Panama
- **Dec 9th** - Norwegian parliament votes unanimously for female suffrage
- **Dec 13th** - Wright Bros make 1st flight at Kittyhawk
- **Dec 16th** - The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower hotel opens its doors to guests

Holmes And Watson – Personal Information

Holmes is living alone at Baker Street. Watson had, at that time, deserted him for a wife, which Holmes characterized as “a selfish action” Big Question - - Is this Watson’s 2nd wife? maybe 3rd?

Dramatis Personae

- **James M. Dodd**, recently of the Middlesex corps of the Imperial Yeomen.
- **Col. Emsworth**, retired from the army

- **Godfrey Emsworth**, his son and former comrade-in-arms of Dodd during the Boer War.
- **Old Ralph**, long-time butler in the colonel's household.
- **Ralph's Wife**, she nursed Godfrey.
- **Mr. Kent**, personal physician to Godfrey.
- **Sir James Saunders**, prominent dermatologist.
- **Baldy Simpson** and **Anderson**, soldiers who were with Godfrey when he was wounded.

Quotable Sherlock

Only one notable quote and it has been used in other tales

- “When you have eliminated all which is possible, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.”

Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen

Ready? This story has NEVER been put on a screen. Not by Eille Norwood. Not by Jeremy Brett. Not by *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century*. Rate it one half of a star.

Fainting In The Canon

In this tale, Godfrey Emsworth and Mrs. Emsworth both actually faint.

Newspapers

Spectator - One of more esteemed papers and was weekly and solidly behind the Unionist cause (opposed to self government for Ireland)

Annotated Sherlock

- . . . **“stoep”** South African Dutch for a covered platform or veranda at the door of a house. (in Baltimore, we still use the term “stoop” for the same thing)
- . . . **“a bit of barney”** an argument, a quarrel
- . . . **“subaltern”** the most junior commissioned officer

Weapons

- **Elephant Gun** - Which was used by a Boar in South Africa to wound Godfrey Emsworth.
- **Rifles** - OF the Boars, from the range of which Emsworth pulled James Dodd.
- **Threat** - Made on the life and health of James Dodd by an indignant and somewhat choleric Colonel Emsworth.

Frank Mentzel