



The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure LIX – The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger

Here we have another mysterious lodger with a past to hide, but this story is very different to The Red Circle even though I do keep getting them confused, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

This is a common problem for me, getting the stories mixed-up because of the similarities between them. So many include women with violent husbands, dodgy deeds committed abroad, foreign baddies with an axe to grind, old lovers re-appearing, governesses in trouble – I mean, surely I’m not the only one who confuses the Copper Beeches with the Solitary Cyclist? But then, in fairness to Doyle, it would be almost impossible to come up with 56 stories without touching on common themes across the series. Love, loss, the past catching up with someone, occur over and over again in most works of literature including my own – I am certainly not saying all this as a criticism, more as an explanation of why the stories can blur and merge sometimes in my mind.

Anyway, on to this particular story and there really isn’t much to say. It’s another one of those which can be described as a good story but not necessarily a good Holmes story. The tale itself is fine, but Holmes has very little to do with it. He gets called in because the woman, the veiled lodger, needs someone to listen to her story before she takes her own life. That’s all Holmes is, just an ear. He doesn’t have to investigate anything, use his fantastic powers of observation or analyse at the scene.



He just listens then shows a surprising level of sympathy and compassion and persuades the woman not to take her own life. Okay, so he does technically save a life, but not much else really.

The woman was married to a violent lion-tamer and has an affair with the circus' strong man. They devise a plan to kill the husband but it back-fires and she gets horribly injured by the lion, condemning her to a lonely life of isolation, hidden behind a veil to hide her terrible scars. She has never told anyone about the crime as her husband's death was put down as being caused by a simple lion attack. This plays on her conscience and prompts her landlady to suggest she unburden herself to Holmes.

And that's it really, wish there was more to add but I don't feel this story moves us forward in our understanding of Holmes or is anything other than a mildly diverting short story.

Can only give it 5 out of 10 I'm afraid.

Charlotte Anne Walters

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