SHERLOCK'S SPOTLIGHT

A Quarterly Gazette for Young Sherlockians Everywhere

Summer 2026

"The Empty House"

Cover artwork by Charlotte Ledwell

Your original artwork could be on the cover of our next issue…

See page 2 for more details!

Welcome to

SHERLOCK'S SPOTLIGHT

Volume 7, Number 3

Summer 2026: "The Empty House"

Published four times a year by The Beacon Society, a society providing educators with resources to bring the magic of Sherlock Holmes to life.

Editor: Steve Mason
Associate Editor: Carla Coupe

Copyright: © 2026 by The Beacon Society

Submit Your Original Artwork for our Gazette Cover

We would love to use a student's artwork for the cover of each issue.
If you would like to submit a .jpg, .png, or .pdf of an original artwork, please follow the simple rules:

- You must be between the ages of 8-13.
- You must have your parent's or guardian's permission to submit the artwork.
- The artwork must be Sherlock Holmes based.

You may send the artwork by email directly to Steve Mason at mason.steve8080@gmail.com
Either have your parent or guardian email the artwork to us or have them include a statement authorizing the use of your artwork in our Gazette.

All rights are hereby assigned to the contributors.

Find out more about The Beacon Society and our efforts to bring Sherlock Holmes to students at: www.beaconsociety.com

Welcome to

SHERLOCK'S SPOTLIGHT

Volume 7, Number 3
Summer 2026: "The Empty House"

Contents

Highlights from the Head-Light, by Rob Nunn, ASH, BSI	4
That's–A–Maze-ing	5
Story Profile: "The Empty House," by Steve Mason, ASH, BSI	6
Entertainment Resources for Younger Sherlockians: Comics, Books, and Graphic Novels, by Beth Gallego, ASH, BSI	7
Brain-Teaser	9
"Taking Stock in Victorian London," by Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD, BSI	10
"What Happened to Col. Sebastian Moran?" by Rich Krisciunas, ASH, BSI	12
Sherlock Holmes Mini-Mystery	14
The Junior Sherlockian Society	15
Puzzle Answers	16

Highlights from the Head-Light

It's time for another great issue of Sherlock's Spotlight! The Beacon Society is proud to publish these quarterly gazettes for all of our readers! This issue focuses on the story called "The Empty House." While it might not sound like an exciting title, the story is so surprising that it makes Dr. Watson faint! Steve Mason will inform you all about the story in his Story Profile and Rich Krisciunas will follow up and see what would have happened to the story's villain in his latest article.

You can solve your own mystery in our latest Mini Mystery as well as the Brain Teaser. You can also move Sherlock Holmes safely through the maze that will get him back to Baker Street.

Liese Sherwood-Fabre's article explains the role of stockbrokers and why they were so important in the Sherlock Holmes stories. And you can't miss Beth Gallego's book recommendations in this issue!

We're so glad to have you here and hope you enjoy the latest issue of Sherlock's Spotlight! The game's afoot!

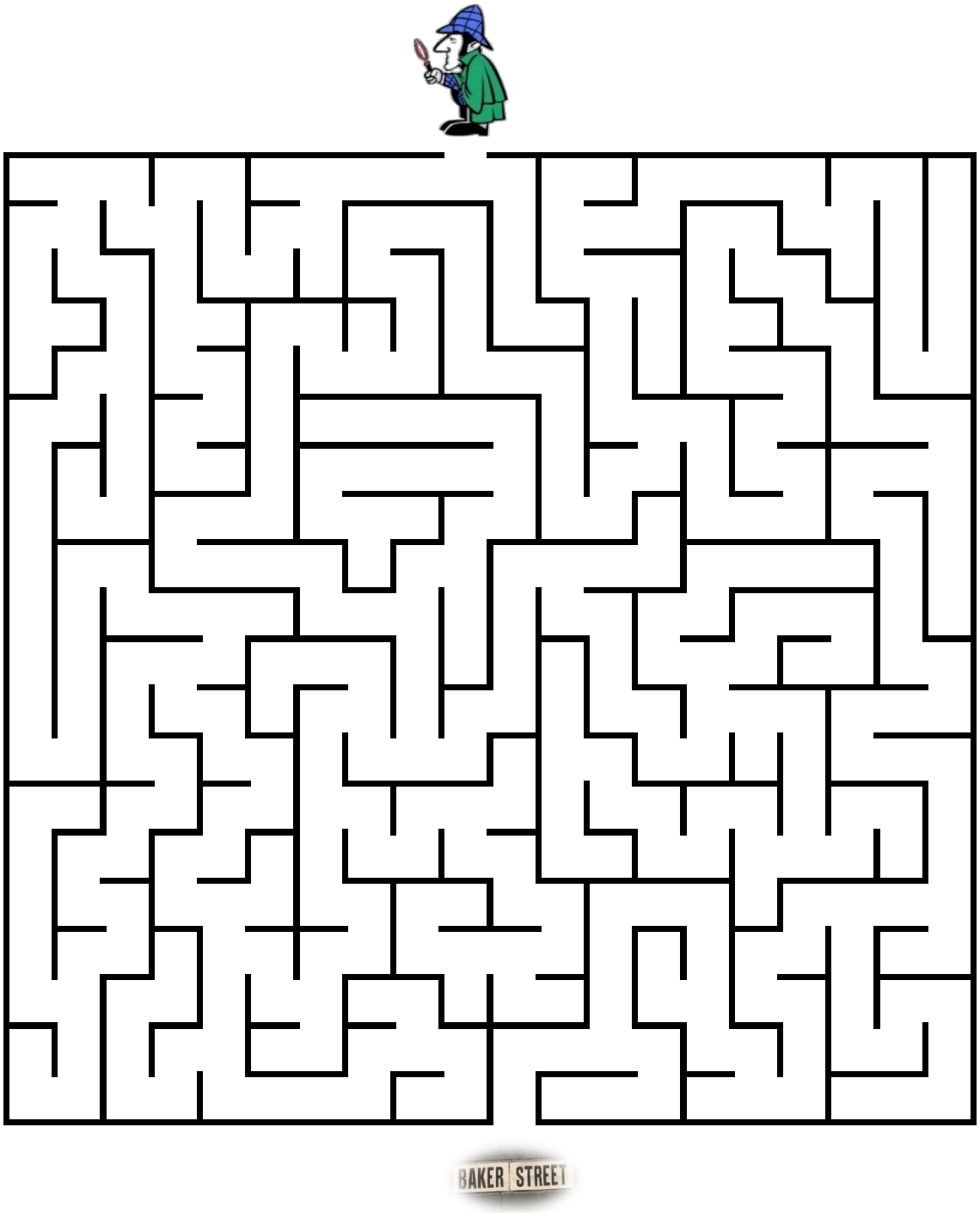
Rob Nunn

Head-Light, The Beacon Society

That's-A-Maze-ing

In "The Empty House", Holmes must escape Colonel Moran's air-gun and his deadly attack. Help Holmes find his way back to 221B Baker Street.

Find the answer on page 16



Story Profile:
"The Empty House"

First published in

- *Collier Weekly Magazine,* September, 1903;
- *The Strand Magazine*, October, 1903

When the story takes place

- April, 1894

Primary Cast of Characters

- **COLONEL SEBASTIAN MORAN**, Moriarty's lieutenant and "the most dangerous man in London."
- **RONALD ADAIR**, murdered with an air gun by Moran.
- **VON HERDER**, a blind German mechanic who designed and built the air gun.
- **EDITH WOODLEY**, previously engaged to Adair.
- **MR. MURRAY**, played cards with Moran and Adair on the afternoon of Adair's murder.
- **SIR JOHN HARDY**, same as Murray.
- **PARKER**, a garroter and henchman of Moran who witnessed Holmes's return to Baker St.
- **GODFREY MILNER AND LORD BALMORAL**, lost to Moran and Adair before Adair's murder.
- **SIGERSON**, an alias used by Holmes while he was presumed dead.
- **MONSIEUR OSCAR MEUNIER**, of Grenoble, fashioned the mannequin.

Summary

Ronald Adair is found murdered in his home on Park Lane. He's been shot in a closed room, with no possible exit through the windows. Adair was a quiet young man. His only hobby was playing cards, and he had just won £240 with his new partner, Colonel Sebastian Moran.

The crime being very mysterious, Watson tries to apply Holmes's methods to get at the truth, but to no avail. One day, as he's examining the area around Adair's house, he bumps into an old man who eventually follows him to his office.

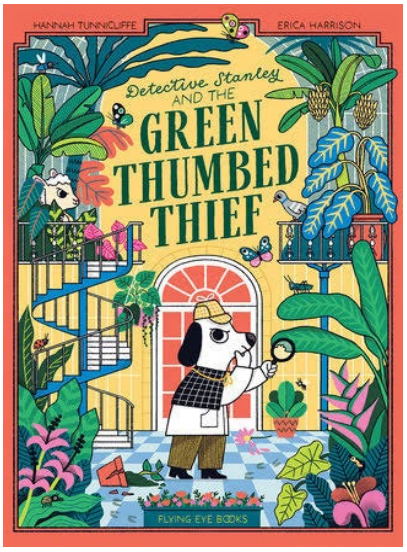
There, the old man drops his disguise, revealing himself to be Holmes. Watson is very shocked to see Holmes alive as he thought he was dead (see "The Adventure of the Final Problem").

Holmes then explains that he never fell at Reichenbach, but took advantage of his "official death" to track down Moriarty's accomplices around the world. He came back to London when he heard about the Adair case because Moran was Moriarty's lieutenant, and has been cunning enough to escape police thus far. The detective knows Moran is aware he came back and intends to kill him.

Holmes takes his friend to an empty house from where they can see the windows of 221B Baker Street. Watson wonders how he can see Holmes's profile through the window, and the detective explains it's a wax bust he is using as a decoy. While Holmes and Watson wait, Moran enters the room without seeing the two men hiding in the dark and shoots the bust. Watson knocks him down as Holmes calls Lestrade to arrest him.

The detective explains to Lestrade that Moran also killed Adair, who had caught him cheating at card and threatened to denounce him.

Entertainment Resources for Younger Sherlockians: Comics, Books, & Graphic Novels



Detective Stanley and the Green Thumbed Thief

Written by Hannah Tunnicliffe

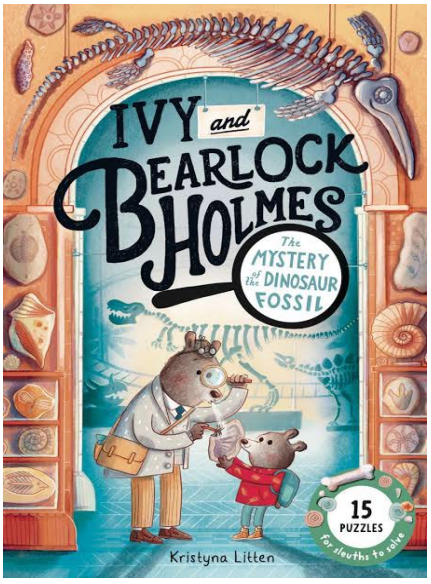
Illustrated by Erica Harrison

Published by Flying Eye Books (Penguin Random House)

Recommended for: ages 6-9 (grades 1-4)

In the second book of this fun graphic novel series, Detective Stanley is into his retirement and ready to relax. On a chilly winter day, he decides to visit his friend Parker Pines at the Narlybone Botanic Garden. Parker is excited to show Stanley the new - and very rare - orchid on display, but they discover that the flower is missing!

Superintendent Shiro is convinced that Parker is the thief, but Stanley is sure that Parker is innocent. Putting on his detective hat once more, Stanley sets out to gather the clues that the police ignored and use them to find the real thief before it's too late. By following the clues Stanley uncovers, the reader can solve the case right along with him. A Case File section provides some fun and surprising plant facts, and don't miss the teaser for Detective Stanley's next adventure, *Detective Stanley and the Trouble on the Train*.



Ivy and Bearlock Holmes: The Mystery of the Dinosaur Fossil

Written and Illustrated by Kristyna Litten

Published by Magic Cat Publishing (Abrams)

Recommended for: ages 6-9 (grades 1-4)

Ivy Holmes is ready for another adventure with her grandfather, Bearlock. This weekend, they will visit the museum and find out who has won this year's Bearona Science Prize. And maybe find out more about the strange object Ivy found near the pier.

A sudden news alert from the Poppy Post announces that a mysterious object has been found on Jurassic Ridge. Poppy believes it is a large fossil. Ivy, Bearlock, Poppy, and Inspector Hopkins travel to Jurassic Ridge to see, but overnight, the fossil has disappeared!

While Detective Hopkins naps on the boat, Ivy and Bearlock investigate Jurassic Ridge for clues before heading back to the museum. Along the way, they learn about fossils and about some prehistoric creatures. The reader can help gather clues by solving 15 puzzles, including mazes, hidden objects, and picture matches. This is not the last adventure for this duo: The next book in the series, *The Secret of the Wild Weather*, is due to be published in January 2027.

.

Beth Gallego, ASH, BSI

BRAIN-TEASER: A Mysterious Shipwreck

After supper, Holmes and Watson were relaxing near the fireplace when Holmes suddenly spoke up.

"Watson, have you read about the terrible shipping incident that happened yesterday?"

"I'm not sure I have," Watson replied. "Where did it occur?"

"A ship named *The Tarantula* was traveling from the United States to Great Britain when it sank just off the coast of New York."

"How awful! How many passengers on were on the ship when it went down?"

"Estimates say just over 1,200 people were on board," Holmes stated, "but here's a bit of a puzzle for the local officials. Since it sank in international waters, where will they bury the survivors?"

Watson pondered on the question for a few minutes. "Possibly where they were born, would be my guess."

"Are you quite sure about that?"

What do you think is the correct location?

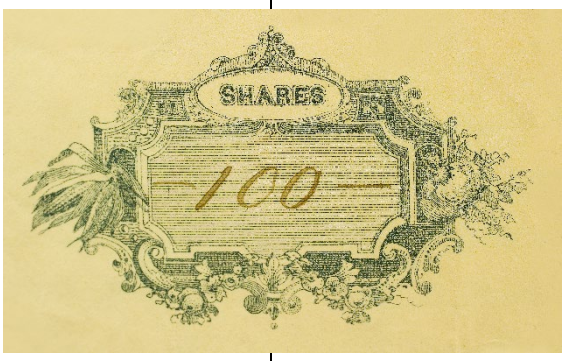
The answer is on page 17

TAKING STOCK IN VICTORIAN LONDON

Two Sherlock Holmes cases are about stockbrokers. Hall Pycroft applied for a job at the stock brokerage firm Mawson and Williams in "The Adventure of the Stockbroker's Clerk," and James Dodd worked as a stockbroker in "The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier."

While people had pooled money for businesses for thousands of years, stockbroking appeared only in the 1600s, and by the 1800s, London had become one of the largest financial centers in the world.

A stockbroker helps people buy and sell small pieces of companies, called "shares." Instead of borrowing all the money they need, business owners raise funds by selling shares. The people who buy the shares then own a tiny part of the company. They buy and sell those shares through a stockbroker.



Many early societies practiced shared investment. In medieval Europe, merchants sometimes pooled their money to pay for expensive and risky trading voyages.

As trade between distant countries increased, businesses needed larger amounts of money to build ships, hire crews, and purchase supplies. By selling shares to many people, the main company owners could manage the business with more money than any one owner could supply.

Such businesses became known as joint-stock companies, in which investors received a share of any profits but could also lose their money if the business failed.

With new banking regulations in the late 1600s, joint-stock companies expanded, and the role of stockbrokers appeared. Business was first conducted at the Royal Exchange, but as the number of stockbrokers grew, the government sought to regulate them. Rather than accept such interference, these men left and set up business elsewhere.

During this time, two specialists developed: brokers and jobbers. Brokers represented clients or investors who wanted to buy or sell a particular share. The broker's counterpart, the jobber, offered to buy or sell the desired share to the broker, but never directly to an investor.

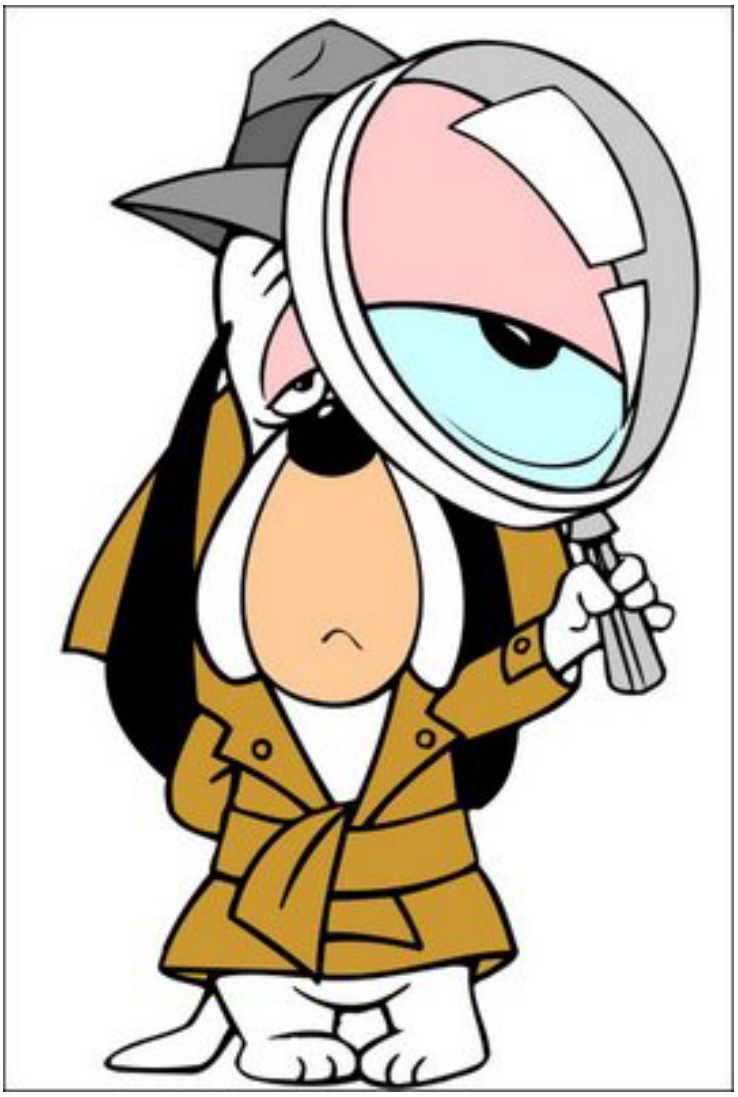
Because some brokers did not follow accepted practices, brokers created a new establishment—the London Stock Exchange—with written rules for conducting business.

The English and international stock exchanges continually introduced new methods for stock trading. The telegraph provided trade information from the New York exchange in only twenty minutes, compared with sixteen days by mail. Ticker tape replaced that in 1872, and the telephone replaced it in 1880.

"The Adventure of the Stockbroker's Clerk" illustrated how criminals could exploit financial businesses. One of the Beddington brothers posed as a newly hired clerk at Mawson and Williams, murdered the watchman, and stole nearly one-hundred thousand pounds in bonds and scrip, which would have bankrupted the firm.

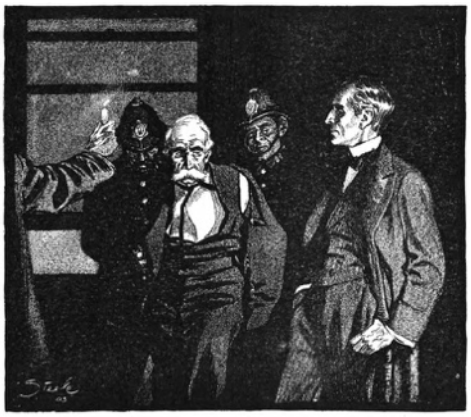
The police caught him as he left the building and recovered the securities, while Holmes uncovered the brothers' elaborate scheme and exposed his accomplice.

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD, BSI



WHAT HAPPENED TO COL. SEBASTIAN MORAN?

In “The Empty House,” Col. Sebastian Moran was arrested after he fired a shot through the window of 221B Baker Street and struck a bust of Sherlock Holmes. Holmes asked Inspector Lestrade what crime he planned to charge Moran with and Lestrade answered, “the attempted murder of Mr. Sherlock Holmes." Holmes responded that he wouldn’t appear in court to prosecute and suggested instead that Moran be charged with the murder of Ronald Adair. Murder was punishable by the death penalty. What ever happened to Col. Moran?



COLONEL MORAN SPRANG FORWARD WITH A SNARL OF RAGE

In looking at the crimes allegedly committed by Col. Moran, you need to examine two separate issues; 1) The crimes, and 2) What evidence could be used at his trial if he were prosecuted.

Let’s look at the crime for which Holmes suggested that Insp. Lestrade arrest Col. Moran**;** the murder of Ronald Adair. Murder is the intentional, unlawful killing of another human being. What evidence could the Crown prosecutor introduce in court if the case went to trial? Who could testify that Col. Moran *fired* the deadly shot that killed Adair? There were no eyewitnesses who could place Moran near the scene. Without being able to produce a witness who could place Moran in a tree or building with his air-gun, with a line of sight to Adair’s residence, a conviction would be highly unlikely.

Holmes assumed that Col. Moran could be proven guilty, circumstantially, because the manner in which Adair was killed was similar to how Moran shot at the bust at 221B and the type of gun used to kill Adair was *similar* to the gun used by Moran.

Today, ballistic evidence might be able to prove that the gun fired by Col. Moran at 221B was the same gun used to shoot Adair. If the Crown could link the air-gun with the bullet that was recovered in Adair’s apartment, the Crown could argue that the manner of the shooting; the same weapon, plus the difficulty of the shot, which would require some special skill that Moran definitely had as the world’s best marksman, would all point to Moran’s guilt.

However, when this story took place in 1894, the science of ballistics was unknown to Scotland Yard, and for that matter, to any police force in the world. The air-gun possessed by Col. Moran and the type of ammunition used for that gun was available to millions of London residents who could have purchased such a gun and possessed such bullets.

Additionally, in 1894, the rules of trial evidence prevented the Crown prosecutor from introducing evidence of another crime against Moran at his trial for the murder of Ronald Adair. The Crown would not be allowed to introduce evidence that Moran used the air-gun to shoot at Holmes’s bust at 221B because it was a fundamental principle of English criminal law that “a prisoner charged with an offence shall not be embarrassed by the allegation of *other* offences.”

This evidence would be admissible in the United States today under Rule of Evidence 404 (b). Similar fact evidence is evidence of past similar misconduct of a defendant for the purpose of inferring that the defendant is guilty of the incident in question. For example, a man wearing a ski mask and a deerstalker robs a party store and steals lottery tickets. The store clerk cannot identify the thief because he was wearing a mask. A week later, the police arrest a man wearing a ski mask and a deer stalker trying to steal lottery tickets from a party store. At a trial for the first robbery, the prosecutor would ask the court to admit the similar fact evidence of the second robbery to prove the identity of the first robber.

The second issue is whether Moran could have been convicted of attempted murder for shooting at the dummy. In 1894, the law of attempted murder was found in "*The Offences against the Persons Act of 1861*." It states, "Whosoever shall. . . by any means whatsoever *wound or cause any grievous bodily harm* to any person, with intent in any of the cases aforesaid to commit murder, shall be guilty of felony." Holmes suffered no injury.

There were two attempted murder cases reported that dealt with the discharge of a gun before 1894. In one, the prisoner shot at a post, believing it was the man he wanted to kill. He was discharged by the judge because of *physical impossibility*. In another, *Regina v. Gaylor* (1857), Chief Judge Baron Pollock said: "If I, believing that there is a person in an adjoining room, when in fact there is no one there, fire a pistol through the doorway with the intention of killing him, I have committed no act cognisable by the criminal law," and he found the defendant not guilty.

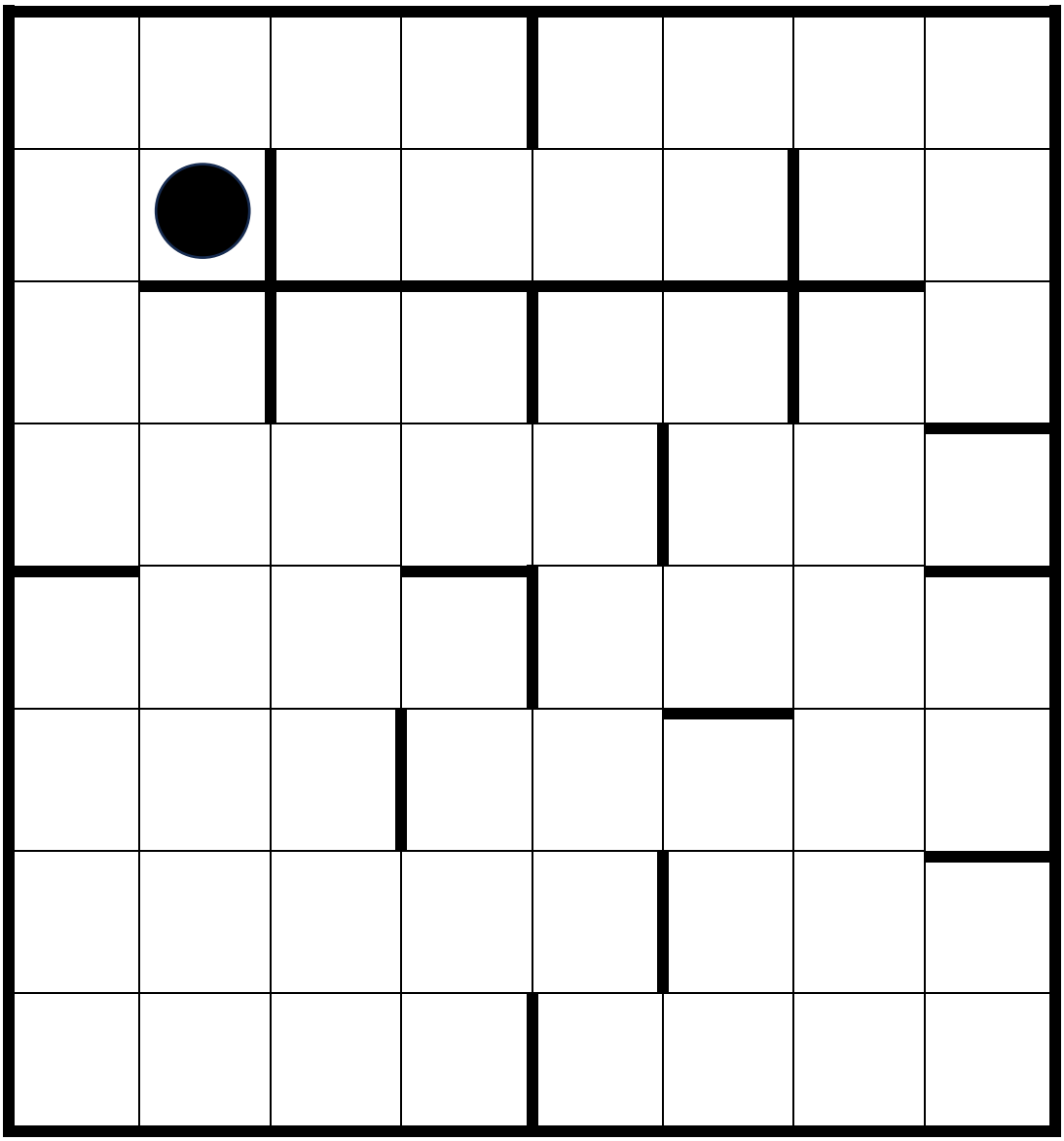
Today, Col. Moran would be guilty of attempted murder. His intent is *factually* criminal; he wanted to kill Sherlock Holmes. He aimed the air-gun and pulled the trigger, and his shot went through the window hitting the bust instead of Holmes. If Holmes had been sitting in his chair, Moran would have succeeded. But, back in 1894, it is doubtful that Moran would have been charged with attempted murder. At best, he could have been charged with a misdemeanor of malicious damage of property for damaging the window and the bust and would have had to pay a fine for the damage.

It's doubtful that Col. Moran was convicted of Adair's murder or the shooting at Baker Street, because, years later, in "The Illustrious Client," when Sir James Damery described Baron Adelbert Gruner as the most dangerous man in Europe, Holmes said "If your man is more dangerous than the late Professor Moriarty, or *than the living Colonel Sebastian Moran*, then he is indeed worth meeting." The fact that Moran didn't hang and wasn't imprisoned is evidence that Moran was either found not guilty at trial or wasn't even charged with any crimes.

Rich Krisciunas, BSI, ASH

Sherlock Holmes Mini-Mystery

Holmes used their checkerboard and marbles to quiz Watson on the following puzzle. Can you place 16 marbles in the grid without touching each other, not even diagonally. The thick lines represent walls that block the view and connection of the marbles. Marbles cannot be connected by a horizontal or vertical line. See if you can place the other 15 marbles.



The answer is on page 17

Steve Mason

The Junior Sherlockian Society

Unlocking a young person's understanding and appreciation of Sherlock Holmes

JUNIOR SHERLOCKIAN SOCIETY
OBSERVE REASON

The game is afoot!

The Beacon Society invites youth to complete Junior Sherlockian Training – an in-depth study of Sherlock Holmes's character traits, observational skills, capacity for critical thought, and inductive and deductive reasoning.

During the online training, Junior Sherlockians-in-Training complete tasks to ***explore***, ***experience***, and ***extend*** their understanding and appreciation of the great detective.

Upon completion of the tasks and submission of "training evidence", a certificate of completion is granted.

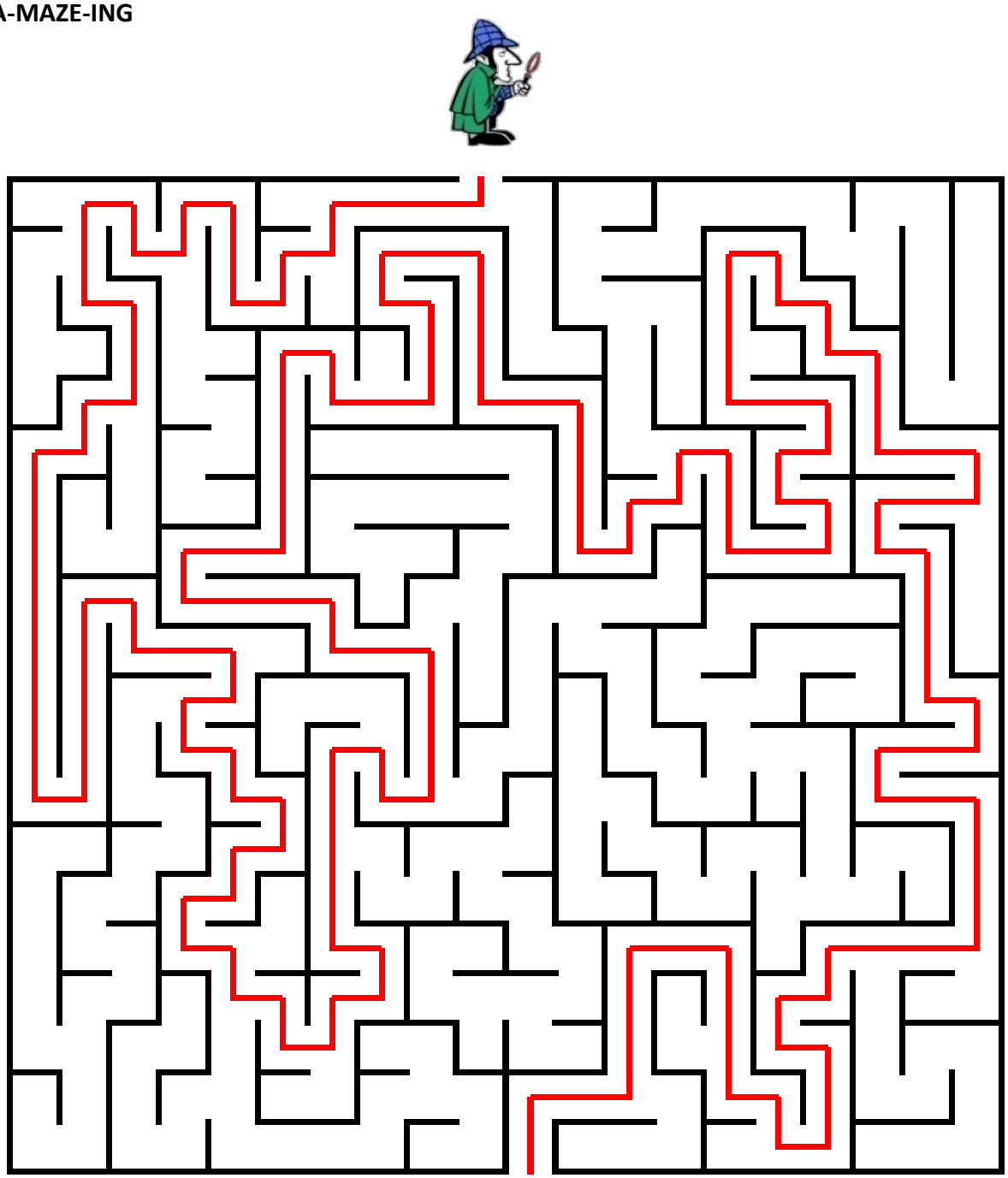
2	2	1	B
Explore Complete TWO TASKS to be introduced to the great detective.	**Experience** Read or listen to TWO stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.	**Extend** Complete ONE TASK to extend your understanding and appreciation.	**'B' RECOGNIZED** Submit your 2-2-1-b training evidence.

Begin your Sherlockian training
At https://www.beaconsociety.com/junior-sherlockian-society.html

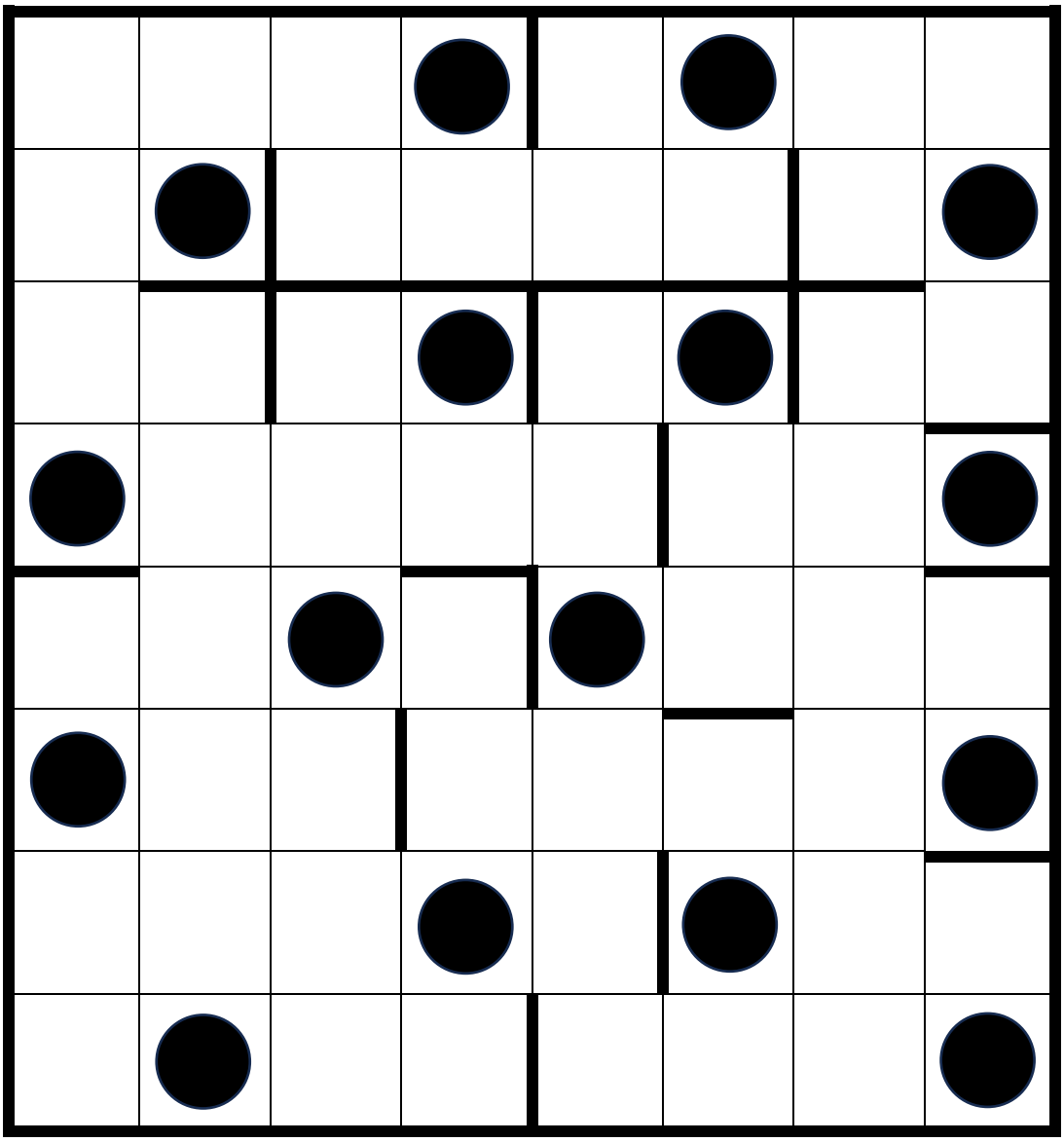
THE BEACON SOCIETY

Puzzle Answers

THAT'S-A-MAZE-ING



Brain-Teaser

As they survived the sinking, they should not be buried anywhere… they are still alive, hopefully for a long time.

Mini-Mystery