

Introduction to Crime Fiction

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February 3, 2025. Pirkis: After Conan Doyle.

review

- ▶ *sjužet* (order of telling) vs. *fabula* (chronology)
- ▶ *anachrony* is fundamental to detection
- ▶ in “A Scandal in Bohemia,” it’s also about mastery
- ▶ and mastery is about gender...
- ▶ ...but what is gender?

His Majesty to regain it with his own hands."

"And when will you call?"

"At eight in the morning. She will not be up, so that we shall have a clear field. Besides, we must be prompt, for this marriage may mean a complete change in her life and habits. I must wire to the King without delay."

We had reached Baker-street, and had stopped at the door. He was searching his pockets for the key, when someone passing said—

"Good-night, Mister Sherlock Holmes."

There were several people on the pavement at the time, but the greeting appeared

to come from a slim youth in an ulster who had hurried by.

"I've heard that voice before," said Holmes, staring down the dimly lit street. "Now, I wonder who the deuce that could have been."

III.

I SLEPT at Baker-street that night, and we were engaged upon our toast and coffee in the morning when the King of Bohemia rushed into the room.

"You have really got it!" he cried, grasping Sherlock Holmes by either shoulder, and looking eagerly into his face.

"Not yet."

"But you have hopes?"

"I have hopes."

"Then, come. I am all impatience to be gone."

"We must have a cab."

"No, my brougham is waiting."

"Then that will simplify matters." We descended, and started off once more for Briony Lodge.

"Irene Adler is married," remarked Holmes.

"Married! When?"

"Yesterday."

"But to whom?"

"To an English lawyer named Norton."

"But she could not love him?"

"I am in hopes that she does."

"And why in hopes?"

"Because it would spare your Majesty all fear of future annoyance. If the lady loves her husband, she does not love your Majesty. If she does not love your Majesty, there is no reason why she should interfere with your Majesty's plan."

"It is true. And yet— I Well! I wish she had been of my own station! What a queen she would have made!" He relapsed into a moody silence which was not broken, until we drew up in Serpentine-avenue.

The door of Briony Lodge was open, and an elderly woman stood upon the steps. She watched us with a sardonic eye as we stepped from the brougham.

"Mr. Sherlock Holmes, I believe?" said she.

"I am Mr. Holmes," answered my companion, looking at her with a questioning and rather startled gaze.

"Indeed! My mistress told me that you were likely to call. She

left this morning with her husband, by the 5.15 train from Charing-cross, for the Continent."

"What!" Sherlock Holmes staggered back, white with chagrin and surprise.

"Do you mean that she has left England?"

"Never to return."



"GOOD-NIGHT, MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES."

“The chief thing I noticed concerning Murray, on the first and only occasion on which I saw him, was that he had had an accident with his bicycle.” (595)

A man, coming along on a bicycle, exchanged a word of greeting with the Sisters as they passed, then swung himself off his machine at the corner of the court....Loveday took it for granted that this man must be the John Murray of whom she had heard....She congratulated herself on her good fortune in having seen so much in such a brief space of time. (585)

perfectly normal

“On the other hand, although it is trivial, it is undobutedly queer, and I know that you have a taste for all that is out of the common.” (“The Six Napoleons,” 223)

“I would only observe that there is a certain method in the gentleman’s [the criminal’s] eccetric proceedings....I dare call nothing trivial when I reflect that some of my most classic cases have had the least promising commencement.” (227)

“Beppo did not despair, and he conducted his search with considerable ingenuity and perseverance.” (250)

curiouser and curiouser

The detective positions himself at the watershed point between singularity and crime, precisely where the two are still indistinguishable, that is, at the point where it is impossible to tell the difference between normality and legality.

Luc Boltanski, *Mysteries and Conspiracies: Detective Stories, Spy Novels and the Making of Modern Societies*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Polity, 2014), 49.

the medium: illustrated magazines

The Editor of *The Strand Magazine* respectfully places his first number in the hands of the public....The past efforts of the Editor in supplying cheap, healthful literature have met with such generous favour from the public, that he ventures to hope that this new enterprise will prove a popular one.

[George Newnes], introduction to *The Strand* I, no. 1 (January 1881): 3, HathiTrust.

“By-the-way, it often occurs to me that the popular detective stories, for which there seems so large a demand at the present day, must be, at times, uncommonly useful to the criminal classes.” (Pirkis, 584)

woman of letters

1839	Catherine Louisa Lyne b. London
1841	Poe, "Murders in the Rue Morgue"
1870	UK public ed. provided up to age 13
1875	NJ public ed. provided up to age 18
1872	Lyne m. Frederick Edward Pirkis
1877	Pirkis, <i>Disappeared from Her Home: A Novel</i> (London: Remington)
1891	<i>Strand</i> magazine begins publication Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia" <i>Ludgate Monthly</i> begins publication
1893	Pirkis, "The Black Bag Left on a Doorstep," <i>Ludgate</i> (February) (first Loveday Brooke story) Pirkis, "The Redhill Sisterhood," <i>Ludgate</i> (April)
1894	Pirkis, <i>The Experiences of Loveday Brooke</i> (London: Hutchinson)
1903	Conan Doyle, "The Six Napoleons"
1910	C.L. Pirkis d.

genre as a field of competition

“The experiences of Loveday Brooke,” commencing in this number, is the first of a series of [clever detective stories](#), by the well-known Author of “Lady Lovelace.”

“Incidents of the Month,” *Ludgate* (February, 1893): 447, [ProQuest](#).

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“The idea seems gaining ground in many quarters that in cases of mere suspicion, women detectives are more satisfactory than men, for they are less likely to attract attention.” (581)

the female gaze

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“Now Sister Monica, I must admit, is not pleasant to look at; at the same time, there was something absolutely beautiful in the way in which she lifted the little cripple out of the cart.” (594)

next

- ▶ pulp studies: *Detective Story*
- ▶ print and read: “Sinking Sands” and “The ‘Snitch’”
- ▶ read online: short magazine history
- ▶ browse and make notes online: the contents of *DS*