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The SHERLOCK ENTREATY

By
Charmaine Spencer

With sincere apologies to Arthur Conan Doyle,
creator of Sherlock Holmes and author of
“The Adventure of the Naval Treaty”

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The Sherlock Entreaty

By Charmaine Spencer

CHARACTERS

4-5W / 4-6M

(Depending on Doubling)

DOCTOR WATSON: 30's; has a medical degree, but prefers the solitude of writing.

WALTER SALLOWFIELD: 40's; an actor, who is not as talented as he thinks he is.

PERCY PHELPS: Watson's school friend; nervous clerk in the Foreign Office.

ANNIE HARRISON: Phelps' fiancée; beautiful, caring, very intelligent.

JOSEPH HARRISON: Annie's older brother, a country gentleman with secrets.

MRS. HUDSON: Watson's landlady; runs her house with a steady hand.

LADY HOLDHURST: Wife of the Foreign Minister, aunt to Phelps.

DETECTIVE FORBES: All business. (May Double with Phelps)

MRS. TANGY: Char woman; keeps herself to herself. (May double with Mrs. Hudson)

RAILWAY PORTER: Irish, amiable. (Male or Female; may Double with Phelps)

DARK FIGURE: Stealthy, mysterious; Joseph in disguise.

TIME

1870's

SETTINGS

Watson's Flat at 224 B Baker Street, London

Joseph's Ground Floor Bedroom at Briar House, Woking

Railway Compartment

Phelps' Room at the Foreign Office

The Sherlock Entreaty

By Charmaine Spencer

ACT I Scene 1

SETTING: *WATSON'S FLAT, night. A small but comfortably furnished second floor Victorian flat. A window, curtains open. Doors to a bedroom and a hallway. Coat rack, one armchair near the fireplace. Nailed to the mantle a bedroom slipper filled with tobacco, above a mirror. On the wall, portrait of Queen Victoria. A small table with bunsen burner, beakers. A classical marble bust fitted out comically with deerstalker cap and meerschauum pipe. A writing desk scattered with papers, large stack of "The Strand" Magazines, a brandy decanter and glass. A trash basket.*

AT RISE: *WATSON sits at the desk, writing furiously. Exaggerated sound of heavy steps on the hall stairs. A knock at the door.*

MRS. HUDSON (*Off*)

Doctor? (Pause) Doctor Watson, your hot chocolate sir.

WATSON

What? Oh, Mrs, Hudson. What time is it?

MRS. HUDSON enters with a cup, cookies on a tray.

MRS. HUDSON

(Entering)

Half past ten it is sir. You're writing very late tonight.

WATSON

The Strand, they want the manuscript on Tuesday.

MRS. HUDSON

Another story as regarding our Mr. Holmes is it?

WATSON

Yes. *(Takes the tray)* Thank you for this. *(Drinks eagerly)*

MRS. HUDSON

Is the faithful landlady at reference in this one?

WATSON

No, this opens in Pall Mall then proceeds to the Diogenes Club

MRS. HUDSON

(Looking over his shoulder)

Who's this Mycroft then?

WATSON

Holmes' brother.

MRS. HUDSON

I never knew he had a brother.

WATSON

Well, he does now.

MRS. HUDSON

So clever, your accounts. Sadie, what does the laundry, I never took her for a reader but she goes on something fierce about 'im. I think, in fact, she has quite set her cap.

WATSON

For Sherlock Holmes? But...

MRS. HUDSON

Well I know, that's what makes it so humorous

WATSON

You won't encourage her.

MRS. HUDSON

'Course not. I will say, though, that she's not the only somebody in London that's keen on meeting face to face with his grand self.

WATSON

What do you mean !?

MRS. HUDSON

Well lately there's been...here, by example, Friday last I saw a fine gentleman...too fine for this part of London by the look'a him. Anyways, there he was, across the road, walkin' up and down makin' an earnest study of the numbers. He had a paper in his hand, so I says to meself, "That's a page torn out'a the magazine and he's looking for 221." But a'course as 221 is the bank building...Well, he puzzled a bit longer and then went on his way.

WATSON

This is not good.

MRS. HUDSON

No. Looked that downhearted he did. Oh. And then, and then. Yesterday, I was over at the bank, with your rent money, and Mr. Oliver, that clerk which I've got me eye on—

WATSON

(To himself)

Is it possible?

MRS. HUDSON

Old I may be, but I'm still a fling away from the trash heap.

WATSON

I'm sorry, what?

MRS. HUDSON

No matter. Anyways, Graydon...ah, Mr. Oliver...says to me the bank has got six inquiries in the last month. Says his manager is most put out that "this arther, whoever he is, should purport to reside at 221B Baker Street with a figger so sought after as this detective person."

WATSON

I should have used our own number I suppose. Just...221, it's more...lyrical.

MRS. HUDSON

If you say.

WATSON

If I'd known. But if I had known...Dear Lord, you didn't tell him...your friend—

MRS. HUDSON

I'm not one to gossip about me tenant's business, no sir.

WATSON

Good, that's good.

MRS. HUDSON

We had a laugh about the names being similar, meself and the landlady what's in the stories, but no, no, your enterprise is your own and I'll leave you to it. Oh, you'll be wanting these curtains drawn, it's that late. Just let me... *(Looking down into the street)*
Oh mercy.

WATSON

What?

MRS. HUDSON

We've got another one. Come, come.

WATSON

(Joining her at the window)

I don't see—

MRS. HUDSON

Across at the bank, rubbin' his neck. Now. He's right under the street lamp. See'im?

WATSON

A business type but very well fixed.

MRS. HUDSON

Ringin' his hands poor sot.

WATSON

Something dramatic has occurred. He's come away without a hat.

MRS. HUDSON

After Mr. Holmes then...OH! *(Jumping back)* Glanced right up at the window. Did he see us?

WATSON

Yes, he's coming across. Strange, he looks familiar, but—

SFX: Doorbell downstairs.

MRS. HUDSON

Oh my stars and angels!

WATSON

Go down.

MRS. HUDSON

What'll I say? Poor gentlemen, what'll I say?

WATSON

Tell him—

SFX: Doorbell, insistent.

WATSON *(Cont'd)*

Tell him you've never heard of Sherlock Holmes!

MRS. HUDSON exits. WATSON hovers by the open door. SFX: Doorbell.

MRS. HUDSON *(Off)*

Give it a minute, I'm coming.

SFX: Heavy steps on the stairs, keys jingle.

MRS. HUDSON (*Cont'd*)

Hello, yes?

PHELPS (*Off*)

Please, excuse me. I'm looking for 221. I must speak with Sherlock Holmes.

MRS. HUDSON (*Off*)

Sorry sir, but—

PHELPS (*Off*)

Do you know him? My card. I'm from the Foreign Office. Percy Phelps.

WATSON

Percy Phelps!

PHELPS (*Off*)

Yes!

WATSON

Tadpole Phelps?

PHELPS (*Off*)

Yes, yes.

SFX: Footsteps running up the stairs.

MRS. HUDSON (*Off*)

Sir!

PHELPS

(Out of breath)

Watson? Is it Watson? I read...Doctor Watson, but I never considered.

*WATSON steps back into the room;
PHELPS follows.*

WATSON

My friend, I'm—

PHELPS

Oh providence! Bumpy. Bumpy Watson. Listen, I read in *The Strand* that your colleague...Sherlock Ho...Home... *(Gasps for air)*

WATSON

My dear man, sit down.

SFX: Heavy steps on the stairs. (This is becoming a comic “bit”).

MRS. HUDSON

(Entering out of breath)

Doctor, I’m that sorry.

WATSON

Never mind, please bring a pot of strong coffee.

PHELPS

I’m not drunk, I’m not drunk.

WATSON gestures; MRS. HUDSON exits.

WATSON

But there is something wrong. You have come in haste by dog cart.

PHELPS

How...?

WATSON

Splashes of mud on your sleeve. Let me get you a brandy.

PHELPS

Yes, yes.

WATSON

Tadpole. My old friend.

PHELPS

You. Here. A blessing, a blessing. May I see him now? Time is everything.

WATSON

If you’ll tell me—

PHELPS

Is he in bed? It’s late. Is it late? I’m sorry but, I’ve gone mad. Oh God Bumpy, don’t you see? My honor, my country. God! Oh God! If the document reaches the French. I must see him. Watson for heaven’s sake!

WATSON

(Handing PHELPS the glass)

Perhaps I can help.

PHELPS

No! I mean...I've read your accounts. My fiancée, my Annie gave me a subscription. Last Christmas. Only last Christmas.

WATSON

Then you must—

PHELPS

You write well but, by your own description, you haven't... I'm sorry, you lack... Oh please, Sherlock Holmes is the only mind who can save me. Save the empire!

WATSON

Well, Holmes is...ah...he's not here just at the moment. Sit down now. *(Leads PHELPS to the armchair by the fire)*

PHELPS sits.

WATSON

Explain. I insist.

PHELPS

Very well, very well. Ah, my brain. Lord Holdhurst—

WATSON

The Foreign Secretary?

PHELPS

And my Uncle. Oh, the look on his face!

WATSON

Come now. The facts. Just a piece at a time.

PHELPS

If I can. *(Deep breath)* I...I'm a clerk in the Foreign Office and this afternoon my uncle trusted to my hands the draft of a treaty between England and Italy. I was to pen a copy. You must understand, this is a very sensitive and secret document concerning our naval forces in the Mediterranean and Ohhh! To have it stolen from under my very nose!

PHELPS *(Cont'd)*

(Springing to his feet, lurching around the room)

If Mr. Holmes cannot help, I swear I shall take my life!

WATSON

My dear chap.

PHELPS

I need...I... *(Pause)* Wait. This room, it's wrong somehow. The Persian slipper with the pipe tobacco, right... but not right; where are his books, his collections?

WATSON

Percy, I must—

PHELPS

My Uncle believes your accounts are merely fiction. He scoffed to the wife of the prime minister. “If anyone has been led to believe this mastermind actually exists, the author has perpetuated a massive fraud.”

WATSON

Fraud? Fraud!

PHELPS

But I know, I see...Look! The deerstalker, the pipe. He IS at home. (*Plunges toward the bedroom door*)

WATSON

(*Rushing to intercept*)

He’s not.

PHELPS

(*Flinging the door open*)

Where is he?

WATSON

On a case...in...Basingstoke.

PHELPS

Basingstoke?

WATSON

On my honor.

PHELPS

And when he is at home...you share a single bed?

WATSON

Ah...well...

PHELPS

(*Pause*)

God Bumpy! If you begged him to return, surely he would...I...I....

WATSON guides PHELPS back to the chair, checks his pulse.

WATSON

This is not well. I will help all I can but you’re dangerously close to a brain fever. Be calm now. Is there someone I can call for you?

PHELPS

Annie. *(Gasp)* My Annie.

WATSON

Where is she?

PHELPS

In the country. Her family home. At Woking.

WATSON

(Pulling a train schedule from the pile on his desk)

You must go down to Woking. *(Opening the door to the hall)* Mrs.—!

MRS. HUDSON is seen listening at the door.

MRS. HUDSON

(Calmly rising)

Doctor?

WATSON

Get me a carriage.

MRS. HUDSON

Right away. *(Exits)*

WATSON

(Consulting a timetable on his desk)

There's a train at midnight. I'll wire your Annie and—

PHELPS

Annie's brother is in town. Joseph. We planned to meet at the Lyceum, before...

WATSON

(Checking his pocket watch)

If we hurry, we might catch him at the theatre. Much the better if he is with you. You'll go down to Woking and I'll—

PHELPS

Basingstoke. That's just beyond Woking. Holmes can meet us at Briar House. Wire him. Tell him Briar House, Woking.

WATSON

I'm not sure he can—

PHELPS

Please! My Uncle called in Scotland Yard, but they're useless. Only Sherlock Holmes...

But... WATSON

Tomorrow or I shall die! PHELPS

SFX: Distant sound of wheels on cobblestone. MRS. HUDSON appears at the door breathing heavily.

WATSON
Come now. We'll go to the theater and find your Joseph.

PHELPS
You come as well. Holmes will need his Watson.

WATSON
Yes, *(Sigh)* I'll come. Mrs. Hudson take his other arm.

MRS. HUDSON
(To WATSON)
"Holmes will need...!" Doctor?

WATSON
Careful now. It's a bit steep.

MRS. HUDSON
But Doctor!?

WATSON
Mrs. Hudson! We are going to the Lyceum, then Waterloo station...Oh, I'll need my key.

MRS. HUDSON
(Grimly)
Don't worry. I'll wait up.

ALL exit. SFX: Heavy steps on the stairs. LIGHTS FADE OUT.

Scene 2

SETTING: *SAME, an hour later.*

AT RISE: *SFX: Foot-steps on the stairs. Door opens. WATSON appears, in the doorway, calls back.*

WATSON

No Mrs. Hudson, go to bed. Don't worry, go to bed. (*Enters*) Come in.

SALLOWFIELD enters, in slightly shabby top hat and evening cape, carrying a violin case.

SALLOWFIELD

Thank you. No applause.

WATSON

May I take your—

SALLOWFIELD hands over the violin case.

WATSON (*Cont'd*)

You play the violin?

SALLOWFIELD

When moved. (*Whips off his hat and cape, hands them over, retrieves the violin*)

WATSON

Perfect. Now Mr...Is it actually Sallowfield?

SALLOWFIELD

Walter Arthur Sallowfield, yes. The lady recognized me, I think.

WATSON

No matter. Mrs. Hudson understands the situation.

SALLOWFIELD

I am so often accosted in the London thoroughfares by adoring fans.

WATSON

No one will recognize you in Woking.

SALLOWFIELD

But we toured this production to the provinces, I'm sure—

WATSON

I don't think so ...you're playing a dog.

SALLOWFIELD

Nanna. It's a pivotal role. The astonishment I register when Peter Pan—

WATSON

I daresay. Will you— (*Gestures toward the armchair*)

SALLOWFIELD

A private engagement. That means no billing but... the pay?

WATSON

As I promised.

SALLOWFIELD

(Sits)

Well...all right. I am at your discretion—

WATSON

Fine, then—

SALLOWFIELD

Until one hour prior to curtain tomorrow evening.

WATSON

I understand. Now, you will be performing the character of Sherlock Holmes.

SALLOWFIELD

Who?

WATSON

You've never heard of him?

SALLOWFIELD

No, but then I haven't done the comedies.

WATSON

What?

SALLOWFIELD

Shakespeare?

WATSON

Oh. No. He's not in a play, he's in *The Strand*.

SALLOWFIELD

That explains it. I never peruse the magazines. If I read anything, it's the *Times* and then only the reviews. So gratifying to see one's colleagues vilified in the press.

WATSON

Ah...yes. So, we have work to do. When we arrive at Woking, you will need to be perfect.

SALLOWFIELD

(Rising)

Never fear, I am a quick study. Just provide me with my sides and—

Sides? WATSON

Script. SALLOWFIELD

No, no script. WATSON

Then...Oh glory! An impromptu...? SALLOWFIELD

Yes, I— WATSON

I've never done improvisation. SALLOWFIELD

Oh. WATSON

No, I'm wrong. There was once. I was Horatio at the Haymarket. Letter perfect until the last moment of the play but...it seems, that evening, I had a touch of the "malaise." The sword fight affected me very badly. SALLOWFIELD

What happened? WATSON

Cradling the body of poor dead Hamlet, I went completely up on my line. "Goodnight, sweet prince" ? Never. I extemporized for a full three minutes. The house was agog and so were my fellow players. Every jack one of them, mute with admiration! SALLOWFIELD

(*To himself*) WATSON

What have I begun?

Just give me my backstory. SALLOWFIELD

What? WATSON

Motivations. SALLOWFIELD

WATSON

Of course, I should explain. I'm...you see I am a doctor, but not a very competent one. At least I've been unable to build a practice. I know the science, I am an excellent diagnostician but somehow the patients...

SALLOWFIELD

Don't like you. Well, as one who makes a profession of being liked...nay, loved, I can say that empathy is a very special skill. To reach across the footlights—

WATSON

Yes. Let me continue. The American, Edgar Allan Poe placed, in one of his stories, a criminal investigator. Intrigued, I thought I would try to invent a detective of my own and give him a mystery or two. As it happened The Strand rather liked my efforts and so, for the past two years, I've managed a comfortable living.

SALLOWFIELD

“A consummation devoutly to be wished.”

WATSON

Yes, but it seems the reading public has gone mad. I did well, defining his personality, his methods, but I never imagined...and now...this is too bizarre...an old friend has gotten himself into a pickle and I believe he will do himself harm, if Sherlock Holmes does not materialize.

SALLOWFIELD

I see your dilemma. But I am equal to the task. Must the name be Sherlock?
It seems to me—

WATSON

Yes. Sherlock Holmes.

SALLOWFIELD

As you say. Far be it from me to question the author. Your Sherlock then, who is he?

WATSON

He has a swift and brilliant mind. A master of observation and deduction. He could look at you and see immediately that you were an actor, that...ah, your barber has a stigmatism in his left eye, your bedroom window faces the east and you sleep, during the day, on your left side. You darn your own socks, cook your own sausages, empty your own—

SALLOWFIELD

That...that is not true!

WATSON

All right.

SALLOWFIELD

I understand why the fellow's a fiction.

WATSON

(Producing a stack of magazines)

You can read my stories on the train. All you will need to know, I think.

SALLOWFIELD

As you say. Then, to the costume.

WATSON

Clothes. Of course, you can't wear what you have on. Let me think. Well...we're going to the country. *(Hands him the deerstalker cap)*

SALLOWFIELD

Not really.

WATSON

And a suit of my own, excuse me.

WATSON exits to bedroom. SALLOWFIELD puts on the cap and looks at himself in the mirror. He tries various angles and poses. He pulls the earflaps down around his chin and moves about as Jacob Marley.

SALLOWFIELD

Scrooooooge.

WATSON

(Entering with suit of clothes and his medical bag)

I perceive that you under-weigh me by seven pounds, but I believe these will do.

SALLOWFIELD

Is your Sherlock a sloven?

WATSON

By no means.

SALLOWFIELD

But this is herringbone.

WATSON

Is it?

SALLOWFIELD

And the cap is houndstooth.

WATSON

I don't see—

SALLOWFIELD

Curse-ed combination. But never mind.

SALLOWFIELD takes the clothing, exits to the bedroom. WATSON gathers props: magnifying glass, notebook and pencil, tape measure. Digs under a pile of papers in a bottom drawer, unearths a tobacco pouch.

WATSON

We won't stop the night, we'll show you to Percy, calm him, ask some questions.

WATSON fills a tobacco pouch from the Persian slipper, adds the meerschaum pipe to the collection. He sorts through the magazines and shoves a roll of them into his medical bag.

WATSON (*Cont'd*)

I never thought Tadpole Phelps was particularly smart but evidently his uncle secured a post for him in the Foreign Office. I imagine Lord Holdhurst expects to rise to prime minister, so he'd ruin poor Percy before he'd take a stain on himself. Are you all right!?

SALLOWFIELD (*Off*)

Oh yes!

WATSON

Ironic. I say I'm doing this solely for my friend but...more to the point... it's to prevent Lord Holdhurst from taking out a warrant...on me. Satan damn Sherlock Holmes.

SALLOWFIELD

(Entering, in costume)

Oh, I hope not. This is going to be rather fun. These my props? Hmm. *(Arranges the items in various pockets)*

WATSON

Let me have the notebook. I'll list the questions you'll put to Percy. Oh...but then...Oh my, he'll expect...he'll speak to his uncle and His Lordship will expect...Oh damn! We have to take the case.

SALLOWFIELD

Do what?

WATSON

Come back to town and look for clues. Can I have you for...I don't know. This is Tuesday...perhaps through Saturday?

SALLOWFIELD

Evenings and matinees excepted.

WATSON

All right.

SALLOWFIELD

Then done.

WATSON

I have no illusion that we might actually solve the business, but I have to try.

SALLOWFIELD

(Looking in the mirror, in his idea of Sherlock's voice)

"Try?" My dear Watson, I beg you not to underestimate me. *(Turns to arrange the props in various pockets)*

WATSON

That's good Sallowfield, very good.

SALLOWFIELD studies the pipe and tobacco. As he pockets the tobacco, gazes around, spots a box of matches on the mantle.

WATSON

I think this is everything, we should...

SALLOWFIELD

(Pocketing the matches, peering into the Persian slipper)

Hmmmm.

WATSON

That belongs to him? I mean...

SALLOWFIELD

(Filling the pipe from the slipper)

Eccentric.

WATSON

Yes, his habits are...casual. But his methods are meticulous and thorough.

SALLOWFIELD

(Looking at the table of beakers, etc.)

Is he a scientist?

WATSON

I dabble, but he...well, it's all in "A Study in Scarlet." *(Picks up his medical bag)*

SALLOWFIELD

As you say. Are we off?

WATSON

Yes. "The game's afoot."

SALLOWFIELD

"Ah-foot." I like that.

WATSON

I'll go down and find a cab.

SALLOWFIELD

Splendid.

WATSON exits. SFX: Sound of steps on the stairs.

SALLOWFIELD *(Cont'd)*

(Looks in the mirror, lights the pipe, strikes a pose)

Excellent Watson. *(Picks up his violin case, strides to the door, stops to survey the room)*

The game is Ah-foot !

SALLOWFIELD Takes a triumphant drag on his pipe, has a fit of coughing, exits. BLACKOUT.

Scene 3

SETTING:

The next morning. JOSEPH HARRISON'S BED/SITTING ROOM AT BRIAR HOUSE. A large casement window, curtains pulled back, opens onto a sunny garden, top of a rosebush visible. A bed, bedside table with liquid medicine, pill bottles, bottle of water, glass. Wardrobe, small table and chair.

AT RISE: *PHELPS is in bed, asleep. ANNIE HARRISON sits in a comfortable armchair in a corner of the room, reading The Strand. SFX: A Knock on the door. With a worried glance at PHELPS, ANNIE jumps up. JOSEPH HARRISON enters, a telegram in hand.*

Joseph, shhh. ANNIE

I have a message. How is the patient? JOSEPH

Shhh. Asleep. ANNIE

Then go have your breakfast. JOSEPH

PHELPS stirs, moans.

ANNIE
(Pulling him toward the door)
Quiet. Go.

JOSEPH
(Turning in the doorway)
What is all this all about? He made no sense last evening.

ANNIE
An important paper's been lost, now please—

JOSEPH
We couldn't put him above in a guest room because... You actually thought he would leap out a window because of a... a paper?

ANNIE
I know it's a terrible inconvenience turning you out of your room.

JOSEPH
Well... well, no matter. If it eases your mind. But, now... *(Hands her the telegram)* he has invited visitors.

ANNIE
(Reading)
He said something. A friend I think.

JOSEPH

Two. On the nine-forty, so you have the time to refresh yourself. Go. I'll stand guard.

ANNIE

I can't. Joseph—

JOSEPH

Of course, of course. *(Pause)* You know, you remind me of the time he went into the brambles playing blind man's bluff. Two nurses and his own mother, but little Annie wouldn't leave his side.

ANNIE

I—

JOSEPH

His injuries were minor but he certainly made the most of them.

ANNIE turns; JOSEPH puts his hand on her arm.

JOSEPH

If you wanted a husband, you might've looked further than the house next door.

ANNIE

(Pulling away, coldly)

Please send the carriage to the station and ask Maddy to assemble a tea.

JOSEPH

I need a clean shirt.

ANNIE

Silently then.

JOSEPH goes to the wardrobe, gingerly opens a drawer, takes out a folded shirt. ANNIE gestures toward the door.

PHELPS

Ah...ah...

ANNIE

(Scurries to his side)

Percy?

JOSEPH smirks, exits.

PHELPS

No... No! *(Sitting up)* Is it war?!

ANNIE
Shhh, no.

PHELPS
No. France has declared.

ANNIE
You're dreaming, dear. Take this. (*Hands him a glass of water*)

PHELPS
They will, you know. France. (*Gulps the water, coughs*) When they learn of the treaty, they will call on Russia to block all trade with Italy and then...

ANNIE
Perhaps it won't come to that. Do you want to get up? Your friends will be here soon.

PHELPS
Friends? Both?

ANNIE
(Holding out telegram)
According to this—

PHELPS
Good, good.. Sherlock Holmes will surely—

ANNIE
Sherlock Holmes?

PHELPS
Yes.

ANNIE
(Patting her hair into place)
Oh dear.

PHELPS
I'll get up.

PHELPS throws off the covers, sets his feet on the floor. He is wearing an undershirt and undershorts.

PHELPS (*Cont'd*)
(Grabbing at the blanket)
Do I have a dressing gown? No, I didn't pack.

ANNIE

(Going to the wardrobe)

You'll have one of Joseph's.

PHELPS

This is his room. Of course. Is this his room? I don't remember...I...Good lord, did you undress me?

ANNIE

(Taking the dressing gown from a hanger)

Of course not, Joseph—

PHELPS

I was a terrible bother.

ANNIE

No.

PHELPS

You are so good, Annie. If this turns out...if I keep my job. We shall have that engagement party I promised.

PHELPS stands unsteadily, ANNIE helps him put on the gown. A brisk knock, the door opens, revealing JOSEPH, WATSON and SALLOWFIELD behind him.

JOSEPH

Percy? Your friends—

PHELPS

(Swaying)

I'm sorry, I...

JOSEPH rushes forward to help ANNIE settle PHELPS into the armchair. In the doorway, WATSON glances into the room, sets his bag down, and takes the notebook out of his pocket.

WATSON

(To SALLOWFIELD)

Right. Here's the notebook. Read the questions I've put down.

SALLOWFIELD clumsily shifts the violin case he's clutching to take the notebook.

WATSON

Did you need to bring the violin?

SALLOWFIELD

I assure you.

WATSON

Well...

PHELPS settled, JOSEPH turns to WATSON and SALLOWFIELD.

JOSEPH

Gentlemen, Come in.

SALLOWFIELD

(Sweeping in)

Places. Act One.

JOSEPH

Excuse me?

WATSON

(Moving past SALLOWFIELD)

Mr. Harrison, thank you. Percy dear man... *(Stops at the sight of ANNIE)*

PHELPS

Watson, Watson.

WATSON

(To ANNIE)

Forgive us for popping up like this. We found an earlier train and...

PHELPS

Doctor Watson, Miss Harrison.

JOSEPH

You walked from the station?

SALLOWFIELD

Excellent air you have in the country.

WATSON

I'm sorry. My friend—

SALLOWFIELD

Oxygen. *(Tapping his head)* Feeds the little gray cells.

ANNIE

(Offering her hand)

Mr. Sherlock Holmes. We're honored.

PHELPS

Forgive me if I do not rise.

WATSON

No, old fellow, stay where you are. Perhaps first I should... *(Retrieves his medical bag)*

ANNIE

Joseph and I will retire.

SALLOWFIELD

By no means.

WATSON

But—

SALLOWFIELD

The doting fiancée must be part of the *dramatis personae*.

ANNIE

And Joseph?

SALLOWFIELD

A hefty fellow. *(To JOSEPH)* You can stand by to move the furniture.

*PHELPS coughs. JOSEPH and ANNIE
pour water; attend him.*

WATSON

(Whispering)

What are you doing?

SALLOWFIELD

What do you mean?

WATSON

You don't want a full audience until you've mastered the part.

SALLOWFIELD

Sit down Watson.

PHELPS

My friend. By me.

WATSON

(Moving the chair from the table)

Do you feel well enough?

PHELPS

Great disaster is upon us. Mr. Holmes must have the facts.

ANNIE

I'll bring in the tea. *(Exits)*

JOSEPH moves away, listens intently.

PHELPS

She's a bit in awe of you Mr. Holmes.

SALLOWFIELD

(Searching through the notebook)

Understandable. Now Mr. Phelps...my first question...ah...

PHELPS

I am at your service.

SALLOWFIELD

Yes...ah...

WATSON

From the beginning. Leave out no detail.

SALLOWFIELD

Yes, good.

PHELPS

The beginning, right. Then...uh...Yesterday afternoon, my uncle Lord Holdhurst. He's Foreign Minister. I'm just a clerk but he...I have hopes. I mean I had.

SALLOWFIELD

Hmmm.

PHELPS

Yes. My uncle is kind but exacting. Brilliant. He knows the cause and effect of every foreign thing...entanglement.

SALLOWFIELD

Entanglements...

PHELPS

Yes...?

SALLOWFIELD

...are made to be untangled.

PHELPS

Uh...yes. So, yesterday afternoon, my uncle called me into his office and handed me the original of a very secret treaty. Has to do with the naval forces of England and Italy. It was ah...well you see, the French and Russians have gotten too big for their britches in the Mediterranean and England and Italy...but, well, I was tasked with making a fine copy. I have a good hand. You remember Watson, my medal in penmanship.

WATSON

I think...

PHELPS

Yes. So I was to do the work in my office, after everyone else had gone for the day. No one was to know. The pact, you see is very...fragile. Very secret.

WATSON

When Lord Holdhurst met with you. Were you seen? Overheard?

PHELPS

No. I'm sure. I mean, the door was closed.

ANNIE enters with the tea tray.

PHELPS (*Cont'd*)

"I rely on you," That's what he said, "I rely on you." I was to keep the papers about me and deliver a copy in the morning. I ask you, how difficult is that? I ask you!

ANNIE

Percy darling.

PHELPS

The treaty has reached Paris, I know it has. And I sit here, stupid, useless.

JOSEPH turns, gazes out the window.

WATSON

Shhh. Rest a moment.

SALLOWFIELD flips through the notebook and scribbles frantically. ANNIE pours PHELPS a cup of tea.

PHELPS

No tea. I must finish.

WATSON

All right, but calmly.

PHELPS

Once the thing is signed, well and good. But the French would pay an immense amount of money to...

JOSEPH turns; stares at PHELPS.

PHELPS (*Cont'd*)

...to get a sniff at this moment. If it reaches Paris, they will take steps, they will try...Oh God! An international incident! On my head. My fault.

SALLOWFIELD

Just so...so...you, uh...you took the papers to your own office.

PHELPS

And locked them in my desk.

SALLOWFIELD

Right. Locked. With a key?

PERCY

Ah...

WATSON

(To PHELPS)

Go on.

PHELPS

As I told you, I was supposed to meet Joseph to dine and attend the theater. I sent my regrets to his hotel.

SALLOWFIELD

Mr. Harrison?

JOSEPH

What? Ah...yes, that's right.

PHELPS

Then, then...then...Everyone went home, I took out the papers—

SALLOWFIELD

Sitting at your desk?

PHELPS

Why yes.

SALLOWFIELD

I think...Let us set the scene.

WATSON

Holmes...

SALLOWFIELD

(Pulling the chair out from under WATSON, placing it at the table)

Excuse me Watson. Miss Harrison.

*ANNIE takes the tea tray from the table
looks around, places it on the bed.*

SALLOWFIELD *(Cont'd)*

(Studying the table)

Not right. Watson. Mr. Harrison, if you please.

WATSON and JOSEPH lift the table.

SALLOWFIELD *(Cont'd)*

Here. No, the light is better just here.

*WATSON and JOSEPH walk two steps,
set down the table.*

SALLOWFIELD

Now the chair. Thus, at an angle.

WATSON

Holmes...

SALLOWFIELD

(Taking a folded napkin from the tea tray)

Watson, you know my methods. Now the document, ah... a long document?

PHELPS

Yes.

SALLOWFIELD

(Unfurling the napkin)

Splendid. Now.

PHELPS starts to rise.

SALLOWFIELD *(Cont'd)*

(To PHELPS)

No, no. Don't trouble yourself. Watson, will stand in. Watson?

*WATSON reluctantly moves to the table,
sits.*

SALLOWFIELD (*Cont'd*)

Who else?

PHELPS

No one.

SALLOWFIELD

Then Mr. Harrison, you will stand by. Miss Harrison take your seat. Mr. Phelps you will direct. You were working at your desk and the time was...

PHELPS

I didn't begin until half past six. Another clerk was slow in taking his departure.

WATSON

His name?

PHELPS

Charles Gorot

JOSEPH

Gorot, that's a French name.

SALLOWFIELD

I'm sorry Mr. Harrison, a stage hand is not to be seen...nor heard.

ANNIE

Darling, perhaps Scotland Yard—

SALLOWFIELD

The Yard? Pish!

WATSON

Holmes—

SALLOWFIELD

(To WATSON)

You are copying. Mr. Phelps?

PHELPS

I had missed my dinner, so at quarter after eight, I was feeling peckish. I got up and rang for the charwoman. She keeps a fire in a small room on the ground floor. I thought I might get a cup of coffee.

SALLOWFIELD

So you rang the bell. Mr. Harrison.

What!?

JOSEPH

Do the bell, you're the bell.

SALLOWFIELD

Ah...Ding?

JOSEPH

More enthusiasm.

SALLOWFIELD

You rang. Did she come up?

WATSON

No. So I went down.

PHELPS

And left the papers on the desk!

SALLOWFIELD

God help me! God help me!

PHELPS

Mr. Holmes, we must stop.

ANNIE

WATSON goes to PHELPS. ANNIE takes a pill bottle from the bedside table.

Fine. The case is solved!

SALLOWFIELD

What?!

ANNIE/WATSON

The charwoman did it.

SALLOWFIELD

No, no. When I went down, she was just coming in.

PHELPS

Are you sure?

SALLOWFIELD

Her hat and cloak were wet.

PHELPS

SALLOWFIELD

It was raining.

PHELPS

I...well...yes.

WATSON

Good, go on.

PHELPS

Oh. So, she promised to light the fire and bring my coffee and then...then a bell rang.

SALLOWFIELD

(To JOSEPH)

Bell.

WATSON

Never mind! Someone rang. From another office.

PHELPS

No, that's the thing. That's when I knew. Imagine. She looked at the array. She said the summons was from my office. Someone in my office. With the treaty laying out there for God knows who. I nearly broke my legs on the stairs but I was too late. No one to be seen and the treaty gone. Gone, gone!

ANNIE

Shhh, take this.

ANNIE hands PHELPS his pills and a glass of water. He complies absentmindedly.

WATSON

You summoned a constable.

PHELPS

And my uncle. I had to...The way he looked at me. Ohhhhh!

WATSON takes PHELPS' pulse.

SALLOWFIELD

What we need are more clues. *(Moves to lift and study PHELPS' other hand)*

WATSON

What are you doing?

SALLOWFIELD

You wrote it yourself Doctor. A sleeve, a thumb-nail.

What? PHELPS

The last man to handle the document. SALLOWFIELD

I? Do you think it was I...who...?! PHELPS

Of course not, of course not. WATSON

If my uncle were to believe... PHELPS

Shhh, dear. He couldn't possibly. ANNIE

Holmes, it's time we took our leave. WATSON

Is it? SALLOWFIELD

We have the facts. WATSON

But surely you must stay for luncheon. ANNIE

No. WATSON

Please. I must stay here, but Joseph will host. ANNIE

I will? JOSEPH

You'll enjoy hearing of Mr. Holmes' adventures. ANNIE

No, he won't. WATSON

But— SALLOWFIELD

WATSON

Out.

SALLOWFIELD

Well, it's true, I cannot remain long out of London. Causes an unhealthy excitement among the criminal classes. So, I'll await. On the lawn. *(Picks up his violin case, exits)*

PHELPS

Will he take the case?...I mean...

WATSON

There are features here that are most intriguing. We'll call in at the Foreign Office.

PHELPS

Please tell my uncle...no, what can I say?

WATSON

I will say you are doing your best to set everything to rights.

PHELPS

Thank you, thank you.

ANNIE

My dear. To bed now. Joseph, the tea things.

Smiling, JOSEPH removes the tray from the bed. ANNIE and WATSON help PHELPS into it. SFX: The distant sound of a mournful violin. WATSON looks to the ceiling, sighs. JOSEPH opens the window, leans out.

ANNIE

Mr. Holmes seems distracted...perhaps, really, the police—

JOSEPH

(Turning back)

Now Annie, if Mr. Phelps feels this Holmes is the man...

SFX: The violin goes off key, SALLOWFIELD appears outside the window, violin and bow in hand.

SALLOWFIELD

(Looking at the rose bush)

Ah, a rose is a beautiful thing. May I? *(Picks a rose and puts it in his lapel)*

WATSON
We're going.

ANNIE
Doctor—

JOSEPH
I'll bring up the carriage. (*Exits*)

WATSON
Miss Harrison—

SALLOWFIELD
Watson, come. (*Disappears from the window*)

WATSON
Well... (*Starts for the door*)

ANNIE
Doctor your bag. (*Hands the medical bag to WATSON*)

WATSON
Thank you...I... Miss Harrison, about Mr. Holmes...I mean don't worry. I can assure you, I will do our best. (*Exits*)

Puzzled, ANNIE watches WATSON go, turns back to PHELPS. LIGHTS FADE OUT.

Scene 4

SETTING: *Train Compartment; Noon, two benches facing each other. The train is moving.*

AT RISE: *SFX: Train whistle; metallic grating as train brakes. WATSON and SALLOWFIELD enter with medical bag, violin case, SFX: Train whistle. Train jerks forward. WATSON and SALLOWFIELD lurch, scrambling onto opposite benches. WATSON takes out the notebook. SALLOWFIELD settles for a nap.*

WATSON
Were you planning to sleep?

SALLOWFIELD

Oh yes. A thespian who cannot sleep on a train will not last a fortnight in the provinces.

WATSON

Where did you start out?

SALLOWFIELD

In life, Manchester. In theatre, at the bottom. But let's have a better subject.

WATSON takes a Strand magazine out of his bag, hands it over.

WATSON

Do your research.

SWALLOWFIELD

(Reading the cover)

"A Case of Identity." Tell the truth, I have read this one. Nice plot but you paint yourself as quite the dullard.

WATSON

A literary device. As a contrast to Holmes. Which brings me to...your performance...ah...

SALLOWFIELD

(Opening the case to the violin)

Hello darling.

WATSON

You're not going to play.

SALLOWFIELD

If you prefer not.

WATSON

I prefer not.

SALLOWFIELD takes up the violin and a white cloth, begins cleaning/caressing.

WATSON *(Cont'd)*

What was that business? The violin in the garden?

SALLOWFIELD

You said your detective plays.

WATSON

When we are at home. For inspiration.

SALLOWFIELD

And I play where I am. For...if you must know...for reassurance.

WATSON

Reassurance?

SALLOWFIELD

You ordered me out of the house.

WATSON

You were making an ass of yourself.

SALLOWFIELD sets the violin under his chin. WATSON grabs the bow.

SALLOWFIELD

(Taking the bow back)

You'll get rosin on your trousers.

WATSON

Forgive me. It's just—

SALLOWFIELD

I have failed the audition and you would like me to withdraw...

WATSON

You can't! I mean...I'm sorry if I...

SALLOWFIELD

That's all right. No one has ever said "Walter Sallowfield won't take direction."

WATSON

I did rush you into this. So perhaps we could...ah... "rehearse" this afternoon and I'll make an appointment with the Foreign Office for the morning.

SALLOWFIELD

Suits me, but I really don't see the point. We've played the scene, reassured your nervous friend. Let Scotland Yard earn their keep.

WATSON

I don't think they're equal to it.

SALLOWFIELD

And your... *(Holding up the magazine)* Bohemian Eccentric is?

SFX: A knock. A PORTER enters with a tray of tea, sandwiches and a small collapsible table.

PORTER

Luncheon sirs.

SALLOWFIELD

Oh lovely.

PORTER

Tea, ham sandwiches and—

The PORTER stumbles, SALLOWFIELD clutches his violin. WATSON catches the tray.

PORTER (*Cont'd*)

Thank you, sir. So very sorry sirs. It's the rail joinings. Come loose a bit on the curves they do.

WATSON

Ah, well...

PORTER

(Setting up the table, taking the tray, setting it in place)

Very sorry. Will there be anything else?

SALLOWFIELD

(Rearranging himself)

A bottle of Madeira.

WATSON

No, nothing else.

SALLOWFIELD

What?

PORTER

I, uh....

WATSON

Give me the bill.

PORTER hands over the bill. WATSON signs. SALLOWFIELD picks up his bow.

PORTER

If you don't mind it sir, the company would be obliged if...I mean if you could refrain from making music in the car.

SALLOWFIELD

What?

PORTER

The other passengers. Thank you sir.

WATSON

(Handing the bill back with a tip)

Thank you very much.

PORTER

(Glancing at the bill)

I say.

WATSON

Yes?

PORTER

Very sorry I am, sir, but is that...? Are you DOCTOR John Watson?

WATSON

Why yes.

PORTER

Then this is...it has to be. Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Forgive me Mr. Holmes, but I... I'm so sorry sir, but could I ask? As you're here...

SALLOWFIELD

(Taking a sandwich)

Hmm?

PORTER

I've got a bit of a mystery. Not a thing to bother you about I'm sure but...your advice would mean a great deal

WATSON

Go on.

SALLOWFIELD peers into the depths of his sandwich.

PORTER

Monday it was. Somebody nicked me tips. I hung me coat see, on the hook while I was having me lunch.

WATSON

With the money in your pocket.

PORTER

Aye and it was a bit of money so I... Mr. Holmes, what should I do? *(Pause)* Mr. Holmes?

SALLOWFIELD

(Pouring a glass of wine)

Me? Ah...use a different hook?

PORTER

What?

SALLOWFIELD

Or a different pocket.

WATSON

What Mr. Holmes means...You want to catch the thief?

PORTER

If I could.

WATSON

Does your cook use powdered saffron?

PORTER

I think so, yeah.

WATSON

Then you keep your money in your pants and the next time you hang up the coat, have a bit of saffron in each pocket.

PORTER

(To SALLOWFIELD)

Is that right?

SALLOWFIELD

Right. Saffron. *(To WATSON)* Why?

WATSON

You remember, Holmes. *(To PORTER)* Hang up the coat and, after luncheon, keep an eye out for the person with the yellow fingers.

SALLOWFIELD

Yellow fingers. That's your clue.

PORTER

Thank you, Mr. Holmes. I'm glad to have had you in me car and I thank you sir for your time and I am sorry to have bothered and it's an honor, an honor and you ring if there's anything more I can—

SALLOWFIELD

Madeira.

PORTER

What? Ah. Ah yes, and biscuits. Right away. (*Exits*)

SALLOWFIELD

That was a nice little scene.

WATSON

What do you mean?

SALLOWFIELD

We work well together.

WATSON

Then, we should continue...

SALLOWFIELD

Perhaps

WATSON

...and solve the thing.

SALLOWFIELD

I doubt we could do that.

WATSON

The clues are there. For my friend. And...look, if we could actually recover the treaty and prevent an international incident. You'd do it wouldn't you? For your queen?

SALLOWFIELD

Old Vicky the prude?

WATSON

Then...for the drama.

SALLOWFIELD

Distraught young man restored to his honor?

WATSON

Yes.

SALLOWFIELD

War between Italy and France averted?

WATSON

Yes, yes!

SALLOWFIELD

An excellent second act, but you can't leave the audience dangling. You must also identify the culprit and pack him off at final curtain.

WATSON

If we do catch him—

SALLOWFIELD

Will you write about it?

WATSON

I don't know.

SALLOWFIELD

And the dramatic rights?

WATSON

Uh...yours.

SALLOWFIELD

Ha! Then we shall play it out. Do you want some of this ham?

WATSON

Please.

SALLOWFIELD holds out the plate. SFX: Train whistle. As the train and lurches, the sandwich slides off the plate into WATSON's lap. He tosses the sandwich back on the plate, rises, grabs his bag, exits brushing himself off. SALLOWFIELD picks up the sandwich, the violin case and exits munching. LIGHTS FADE OUT.

Scene 5

SETTING: *Next morning; PHELPS' ROOM IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE'. Drab little windowless office. Empty except for desk, chair, lamp, bell pull, framed map of Great Britain on the wall.*

AT RISE: *SALLOWFIELD, WATSON, LORD enter.*

WATSON

I wired Lord Holdhurst's office to request that he meet us, I don't know... (*Looks at the office stunned*)

SALLOWFIELD

Drab little hole.

WATSON

This can't be Percy's office.

SALLOWFIELD

Number twenty-seven.

WATSON

But it's completely empty!

LADY HOLDHURST, in aristocratic finery, appear in the doorway.

LADY HOLDHURST

It was vital that his papers be secured.

WATSON

I'm sorry... I...

LADY HOLDHURST

(Extending her hand)

Lady Eugenia Holdhurst. My husband is—

WATSON

(Bowing over her hand)

Foreign Minister. Yes. We had hoped your husband—

LADY HOLDHURST

Oh, Sebastian took himself off to France.

WATSON

In the event that the treaty...

LADY HOLDHURST

Ever the diplomat... (*Spots SHALLOWFIELD*) Oh. Hallo.

WATSON

Lady Holdhurst, Sherlock Holmes.

LADY HOLDHURST

Oh, not actually! My husband assured me you were the figment of some writer's fevered imagination...

WATSON

Fevered...?

LADY HOLDHURST

Yes, and “the public’s unfortunate appetite for light reading.”

SALLOWFIELD

Perfectly understandable, Lady Holdhurst. I appreciate my Boswell here, but detection is an exact science and his accounts run more in the style of Charles Dickens.

WATSON

Uh—

LADY HOLDHURST

Well, I am truly delighted to meet you, Mr. Holmes. I shall resubscribe to *The Strand* immediately.

WATSON

Lady Holdhurst, I wonder—

LADY HOLDHURST

What I’m doing here. Ha. Of course. A woman’s place and all that codswallop. But, listen to me. The deputy secretary is one of those peerage appointees. You know, totally incapable. So...so when my husband is away, I am his surrogate. Absolutely sub-rosa, you understand.

WATSON

Yes, yes.

LADY HOLDHURST

(To SALLOWFIELD)

So tell me Mr. Sherlock Holmes. What happened here?

SALLOWFIELD

I...well...I never theorize until the facts have all been collected.

LADY HOLDHURST

Then proceed. Collect.

SALLOWFIELD

Right ho...uh...

SALLOWFIELD takes out tape and measures distance from the desk to wall, bell pull to floor. LADY HOLDHURST steps out of his way.

WATSON

My Lady, you must understand this is...difficult. The scene has been swept clean.

LADY HOLDHURST

Percy's effects were moved to a storeroom. Sebastian and I do hope that our dear nephew may return to his position, but the kinship is awkward. There is little we can do.

WATSON

But if there was evidence...

LADY HOLDHURST

Oh, the police made a thorough investigation in situ.

SALLOWFIELD

So much for top billing.

LADY HOLDHURST

Excuse me?

SALLOWFIELD climbs on the chair to inspect framed map on the wall.

LADY HOLDHURST (*Cont'd*)

(*To SALLOWFIELD*)

Say, what are you doing?

SALLOWFIELD

Data! Data!... I can't make bricks without clay.

SALLOWFIELD picks something off the frame, looks at his with the magnifying glass, sniffs it, flicks it away.

WATSON

Can we speak to the police detective?

LADY HOLDHURST

Detective Forbes has been asked to step in. And the charwoman is also at your service. Just ring.

WATSON

Do you know if Lord Holdhurst mentioned, to anyone, that he meant to give the treaty over to be copied?

LADY HOLDHURST

I doubt it. He's taciturn to a fault. Why I have to search his pockets just to...ah...ahem.

WATSON

Yes...ah...Mr. Phelps swears he spoke to no one. So the thief's presence in this room, on this particular evening, must be purely accidental.

LADY HOLDHURST

Or there was no one here at all...save our nephew...

SALLOWFIELD

(Looks up from his investigations)

Hmmm?

WATSON

You cannot believe...

LADY HOLDHURST

I don't wish to, of course. But he seems to have disappeared and—

WATSON

Not disappeared, just gone to...to friends. I assure you he is distraught.

SALLOWFIELD

Of course he might be acting.

WATSON

No.

LADY HOLDHURST

Well, as it may be. I do not know him really. Not well. Sebastian's sister and he...well, families you know. Still, I urged my husband to help the boy get on.

WATSON

Just so.

LADY HOLDHURST

But now. I hope our trust was not misplaced.

WATSON

It wasn't.

LADY HOLDHURST

As you say. Well, I believe the investigation is in good hands.

SALLOWFIELD

You may be assured.

WATSON

One last thing. Did Lord Holdhurst say...? If the document finds its way to Paris...

LADY HOLDHURST

Disaster! French opposition would destroy the agreement. I tell you, Sebastian was truly beside himself. I was trying to help him pack. Shirts and collars and socks every which way.

WATSON

But—

LADY HOLDHURST

What did he say exactly. Something about Russia and balance of power in the Mediterranean.

SALLOWFIELD

(Surveying the room)

No window.

LADY HOLDHURST

None whatsoever.

*SALLOWFIELD scribbles in notebook;
moves to examine the door.*

WATSON

And he would know immediately when the French—

LADY HOLDHURST

Oh yes. That's why he went. To be on hand, to try to...to report to the Prime Minister if he couldn't...oh! This could destroy him! Destroy us both!

WATSON

When is the treaty to be signed?

LADY HOLDHURST

Monday next.

WATSON

So, in three days the secret is worthless.

LADY HOLDHURST

I must go.

WATSON

Three days. If you hear form your husband.

LADY HOLDHURST

His office will be informed.

*Testing the hinges, SALLOWFIELD
opens the door just as LADY HOLD-
HURST turns. She looks at his askance
and exits. He watches her go.*

SALLOWFIELD

Ah, the nobility. I'd cast her in Moliere or maybe Wilde.

WATSON

Sallowfield, listen. The thief is surely on his way to the continent. We have only until tomorrow or, please God, Saturday. Pray Detective Forbes can shed some light. Let me have the notebook.

SALLOWFIELD

(Handing over the notebook)

You may check my measurements.

WATSON

Of what?

SALLOWFIELD

Consider this. Phelps was forced to stand. When he rang for the charwoman.

WATSON

All right.

SALLOWFIELD

A nice bit of blocking that. Stand, ring, turn. Now, waiting for her to come up. What did he do in the interval?

WATSON

Sat down to his work.

SALLOWFIELD

Too static, won't play.

WATSON

Blast!

SALLOWFIELD

That's all I can get. This set is badly in need of dressing.

WATSON

Augh! I'll ring for the charwoman. *(Pulls the bell cord)*

SFX: An immediate knock on the door. Stunned, WATSON opens it to see the charwoman, MRS. TANGEY, in the doorway, with a dust mop.

MRS. TANGEY

May I be of service?

WATSON

Ah...

MRS. TANGEY

(Holding out her hand)

Aye, Evelyn Tangey. Howd'ya do.

WATSON

How did you...? Don't the bells ring in your room?

MRS. TANGEY

(Taking her hand back and wiping it on her skirt)

Yes sir, two levels down.

WATSON

Then—?

MRS. TANGEY

Didn't come by the bell then, did I?

WATSON

Then how?...

MRS. TANGEY

(Swinging the mop vigorously)

Doin' me moppin' of hall here.

SALLOWFIELD

What did you hear?

MRS. TANGEY

Besides meself mentioned? Nothin' I didn't already know from the fuss goin' on.

SALLOWFIELD spots something on the floor, goes down on his knees with the magnifying glass.

WATSON

The evening of the theft, Mr. Phelps says—

MRS TANGEY

(To SALLOWFIELD)

Say, I don't know what yer lookin' for but you won't find a speck 'a dust nor a shoe mark in this office.

SALLOWFIELD

No, there's something here.

MRS. TANGEY

I won't believe it.

SALLOWFIELD

No, sorry, grain of the wood.

WATSON

(To MRS. TANGY)

It was you who cleaned the room?

MRS. TANGY

Top to bottom with a good strong brush.

SALLOWFIELD

(Standing, looking at MRS. TANGY through his glass)

You're the charwoman.

MRS TANGY

Who did'ya think? Sweetheart to the Foreign Minister?

WATSON

Sallowfield...ah...Holmes.

SALLOWFIELD

No, I'm on to something. *(To MRS. TANGY)* You come and go in these offices.
As you please?

MRS. TANGY

I gotta clean don't I? Wait. I get your meaning.

SALLOWFIELD

Show me your hands.

MRS. TANGY

Show you me fist. I already been suspicioned by the police.

SALLOWFIELD

Ah.

MRS. TANGY

"Ah" nothin'. Took me to me room downstairs, they did, and stripped me to me knickers.
Called in a female, but still...

SALLOWFIELD

You might have thrown the treaty in the fire.

MRS. TANGY

Weren't no fire. I just come in.

WATSON

(Reading from the notebook)

You were behind your time.

MRS. TANGY

Omnibus was late. The streets of an evening. Clogged up with carriages. Rich folk to the theatre, God knows why.

SALLOWFIELD

I beg your pardon!

MRS. TANGY

And raining it was.

WATSON

So your boots were wet.

MRS. TANGY

Me entire self more like.

SALLOWFIELD

A ha !

WATSON

Holmes, why don't you take a look in the corridor.

MRS. TANGY

You won't find a track, not from me. Put me soft slippers on. *(Pulling away her skirts)* See?

SALLOWFIELD

Well, then—

WATSON

Chart the arrangement of the rooms, anything.

SALLOWFIELD

(Pouting)

I need the notebook.

WATSON hands him the notebook. SALLOWFIELD takes it, flounces out.

WATSON *(Cont'd)*

Mrs. Tangey sit down.

MRS. TANGY

Don't mind if I do.

MRS. TANGY leans the mop against the wall, settles happily into the chair behind the desk.

WATSON

All right...so...you came in, it was raining and you did not come upstairs.

MRS. TANGY

Hardly got me scarf off, Mr. Phelps was standin' there lookin' peeved and after 'is coffee. And then the bell went.

WATSON

The bell. From this office?

MRS. TANGY

I says to Mr Phelps, "Why sir, if you're standin' here, who is it that ringin' from yer own digs?" Well, he goes white in the face and flings himself up the stair and then not a minute later, down he comes again. Out the street door and back in with a constable and then all hell, and the next thing I know I'm in me knickers and—

SALLOWFIELD

(Entering)

There's a side stairway. To a back street.

MRS. TANGY

So there is.

WATSON

Is the door kept locked?

MRS. TANGY

Not during working hours. I lock up after I come in. Front and back.

SALLOWFIELD

(Pointing at Mrs. Tangy)

But on the night of the crime...

MRS. TANGY

Poke that finger in yer own eye. I told ya what happened.

WATSON

I'm sorry Mrs.—

MRS. TANGY

(Rising)

Look, I been scrutinized in and out and down to me drawers. I been given a clean character by the official police and I'm hanged if I'm gonna allow this smug-ass to come in here and...

WATSON

Holmes...

SALLOWFIELD

I'll inspect the stairs. *(Exits)*

MRS. TANGY

A clean character I tell you and I won't be accused. Strip me down right here, if ya—

WATSON

No! Nobody wants to—

FORBES

(Entering)

Is there a problem here?

MRS. TANGY

There! You was here.

FORBES

(To WATSON)

Forbes from Scotland Yard.

MRS. TANGY

You tell 'im.

FORBES

Mr. Holmes?

WATSON

Doctor Watson. Holmes is—

MRS. TANGY

You're the copper, you tell this gentleman, what thinks whatever he thinks, that these goings on got nothin' to do with me.

FORBES

Oh well, Molly, we know you're not our culprit. You go on about your work now. We'll ring if we need you.

MRS TANGY

(Grabbing her mop)

I'm an honest woman. *(Calling out the door to SALLOWFIELD)* And you can thank me for the cleanliness of them stairs too. *(Exits)*

FORBES

(Laughing)

A lively sort. Now. I have to say, Mr. Watson, I've come at the request of the Foreign Minister and I should tell you, right up front, that I am a reader of your "adventures".

WATSON

Indeed?

FORBES

The Strand gets passed around the Yard on a regular basis and it's agreed you do write an imagi-tative story. "The Crooked Man" and that last one...

WATSON

"The Resident Patient."

FORBES

Imagi-tative, like I say. But, as professionals, we don't think too much of your Sherlock Holmes.

SALLOWFIELD

(Enters)

Is that so?

WATSON

Detective Forbes, Mr. Holmes.

SALLOWFIELD

You don't like my methods?

WATSON

Detective, we just have a few questions to—

FORBES

(To SALLOWFIELD)

No and for all your swagger, you won't be solving this case.

SALLOWFIELD

Why not?

FORBES

First, there's not a shred of evidence.

WATSON

This office. Could you describe it. Before it was sanitized?

FORBES

Papers on the desk. The clerk's copy of said documents, what was completed. Some other folders, pen, ink, all that. Framed document. Some kind of award.

No traces of an interloper.

WATSON

None.

FORBES

It was a wet night.

WATSON

Was indeed.

FORBES

And you arrived at—

WATSON

Fifteen minutes or so from the time when the cry was raised.

FORBES

And there were no wet marks or mud on the floor?

WATSON

Not here, nor up the side stair.

FORBES

Ah! The side stair.

SALLOWFIELD

The thief could have been hiding in the building.

WATSON

Nah. Offices are locked up when their respective inhabitants go home. No concealment possible in the corridor, or as you can see, in here. Of course we perused the Frenchman who stayed behind his time, traced his movements, searched his digs this morning.

FORBES

And nothing.

WATSON

As I say, you're wasting your time on this. Our own experts have—

FORBES

Experts, like yourself, I'm sorry to say, see...they see but they do not observe.

SALLOWFIELD

I beg your—!

FORBES

SALLOWFIELD

For example, the side stairs. How many steps from the door to this level?

FORBES

Could have come and gone in four minute or less.

WATSON

Holmes...

SALLOWFIELD

But how many steps exactly?

FORBES

(Fuming)

I'm sure I don't know.

SALLOWFIELD

Exactly!

FORBES

Well Mr. Sherlock Holmes. I'm sorry for you but I do observe, and I've been observing that I believe I have seen you before.

SALLOWFIELD

Oh?

FORBES

In the West End.

WATSON

Oh no.

SALLOWFIELD

Well, ah...I do get around.

FORBES

This face here was on a poster at one of the theaters. You are an actor.

SALLOWFIELD

I am.

WATSON

Ohhhhh...

SALLOWFIELD

The poster you saw, I was...at the time...I must have been...yes! I was on a case. In one of my many disguises.

WATSON

Yes.

SALLOWFIELD

An uh...a very valuable costume had been stolen and I had my sights on the leading lady. Played a fortnight to very good reviews. They asked me to join the company but...

FORBES

Well, means nothing to me. Your little charade.

SALLOWFIELD

Charade?! When I have identified the culprit—

FORBES

Winter day in hell.

SALLOWFIELD

As I say “when,” you will informed. I enjoy spinning my spidery web but the flies I leave to you.

FORBES

Wha—?

WATSON

Detective, please take my card, if you learn anything more—

FORBES

Ha. (*Exits*)

SALLOWFIELD

Did you see that? “Saw that face in the West End” he says. Did you hear? I CAN improvise!

WATSON

Oh be quiet. Let me think. What do we have?

SALLOWFIELD

You mean clues?

WATSON

Mrs. Tangey agrees with Percy’s account. That’s good.

SALLOWFIELD

Unless he was playing her a little scene.

WATSON

No, I don’t see... (*Pause*) Oh of course! If Percy took the treaty, who rang the bell?

SALLOWFIELD

The bell. Yes.

WATSON

Someone came in from the street. But there were no marks of damp in the office or on the stairs.

SALLOWFIELD

Stairs. Twenty-eight steps to the door and four down to the hitching post.

WATSON

Hitching post? *(Pause)* of course.

SALLOWFIELD

I say, what's the time?

WATSON takes out his watch, opens it as SALLOWFIELD peers over his shoulder.

SALLOWFIELD *(Cont'd)*

Tinkerbelle save me! I have a matinee!

WATSON

Let's go then. Back stairs.

SALLOWFIELD

(Bolting out of the door)

I'll find a cab.

WATSON

A cab. Of course. Sallowfield! Tell the cabbie, the newspaper offices. I need to place an advertisement. *(Exits)*

Scene 6

SETTING: *WATSON'S FLAT, Next Morning. The leftovers of breakfast are on the table.*

AT RISE: *WATSON paces, reading the notebook. SFX: Doorbell. WATSON rushes to the window.*

WATSON

Drat, it's you.

SALLOWFIELD *(Off)*

Thank you Mrs. Hudson.

SFX: Footsteps on the stair. SALLOWFIELD enters, carrying cloth covered items on hangers and his violin case.

SALLOWFIELD (*Cont'd*)

My dear Watson.

WATSON

Humph.

SALLOWFIELD

Oh, I've missed breakfast. Oh well. What scene do we play today? (*Removes his jacket and dons the dressing gown from his collection*) I was at the theatre rather late, plundering the costume shop. What do you think? The indoor Holmes. And, and... (*Displays a plaid greatcoat, the deerstalker hat and a walking stick*) The outdoor Holmes. And look... (*Placing The deerstalker and the coat together*) Houndstooth.

WATSON looks out the window.

SALLOWFIELD (*Cont'd*)

(Posing with the walking stick, then pulling a long sword out of it)

And this. En garde! I'm ready to confront our culprit.

WATSON

We don't have a culprit.

SALLOWFIELD

No answer to your advertisement? No cabbie on the doorstep to claim the reward?

WATSON

Not yet.

SALLOWFIELD

You're certain our man came by cab?

WATSON

If he had come on foot there would have been muddy tracks.

SALLOWFIELD

Seems obvious.

WATSON

But...

WATSON/SALLOWFIELD

"Nothing is more deceptive than the obvious"

WATSON

You've been reading.

SALLOWFIELD

Nana is off stage for all of the second act. Your stories are quite good.

WATSON

Thanks.

SALLOWFIELD

Actually I was so engrossed with "The Yellow Face" I nearly missed the curtain call.

WATSON

(Looking out the window)

Writing is so easy. I need a clue to appear, there it is. But here, if we don't get our cabbie, we're finished.

SALLOWFIELD

Quite the three pipe problem. *(Goes to the Persian slipper, fills the meerschaum pipe)*

WATSON

If the treaty reaches Paris, we might trace the man back, but the damage to poor Percy... The damage will be done.

SALLOWFIELD

(Lighting up)

I still think it was Phelps who did it.

WATSON

Impossible.

SALLOWFIELD

"When you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

WATSON

Oh shut up.

SALLOWFIELD

I'm afraid, my good doctor, you have become too emotionally involved in this case.

WATSON

Never.

SALLOWFIELD

Hmmm.

WATSON

Well...perhaps. But Percy Phelps...I, myself, was quite the outcast at school. All brain, and nothing much else.

SALLOWFIELD

Hmmm... (*Wanders to WATSON'S science table*)

WATSON

At cricket, they called me Bumpy because I was slow and plump. But Percy helped me accept myself and the horrid name. He happily welcomed Tadpole, he said, because it meant he was destined to grow into something. And he has.

*SALLOWFIELD picks up two beakers,
pours liquid from one to another.*

WATSON (*Cont'd*)

But now...he has come to me for help and I'm useless. (*Pause*) What are you doing?

SALLOWFIELD

I have no idea. (*Sets beakers down, quickly backs away*)

MRS. HUDSON

(Entering with teapot, plate, toast rack, jelly pot on a tray)

Tea and toast for Mr. Holmes.

SALLOWFIELD

(Sherlock voice)

Thank you Mrs. Hudson. Very good of you.

MRS. HUDSON

(Clearing the table)

Something more for you Doctor?

WATSON

No, no.

*MRS. HUDSON exits; SALLOWFIELD
eats.*

WATSON

Maybe I'm too involved. Detection is an exact science and should always be approached in a cold and unemotional manner.

SALLOWFIELD

Umm-hmm.

WATSON

So. Let us think. We need more facts. If it wasn't a cab... (*Flipping through the notebook*)
Let's go back. (*Pacing through the scenario*) All right. Percy gets hungry, rings for Mrs.
Tangey. Waits. Goes down the front. So, the thief comes in, seizes the papers. Then what?
Listens at the door? Peers out?

SALLOWFIELD

Good piece of blocking there.

WATSON

Percy is still with Mrs. Tangey, so the way is clear.

SALLOWFIELD

Until the bell rings and your Percy goes mad and—

WATSON

“The bell rings.” That's it. Instead of bolting, instead of dashing out and down the stairs, the
thief rings to summon the charwoman? In God's name, why?

SALLOWFIELD

Good question.

WATSON

And there we stop.

SALLOWFIELD

Also an excellent marmalade.

WATSON

What?

SALLOWFIELD

I'm sorry. (*Completing his meal*) I'm really no help, am I? (*Goes to his violin case, opens it*)

WATSON

You're all right. It's me.

SFX: Doorbell.

WATSON

Eureka! (*Springs to the window*)

SALLOWFIELD

Cabbie?

WATSON

No. Boy from the telegraph office.

SFX: Footsteps on the stairs.

MRS. HUDSON

(Enters)

Doctor. An urgent message. From Woking. *(Hands WATSON a telegram)*

WATSON

Percy. Oh God.

WATSON reads as SALLOWFIELD calmly closes, latches the violin case, changes his dressing gown for the great-coat and deerstalker.

WATSON *(Cont'd)*

There's been a burglary. In the night. Someone tried to break into Percy's room.

MRS. HUDSON

Oh dear.

WATSON

Not hurt it seems.

SALLOWFIELD

But he begs us come.

WATSON

(Collecting his coat, medical bag)

Yes.

SALLOWFIELD

Our man is certainly having a dreadful week.

WATSON

Mrs. Hudson, I'll be at Briar House, Woking. Wire if you get a visit from a cabbie...get his address.

MRS. HUDSON

Surely.

WATSON

(To SALLOWFIELD)

Ready?

SALLOWFIELD

(Picking up his violin case and walking stick)

The plot thickens.

*WATSON and SALLOWFIELD Exit.
MRS. HUDSON starts to clear up. SFX:
Two sets of footsteps on the stairs sud-
denly stop, one returns.*

SALLOWFIELD

(Leaning in the door)

The Lyceum Theatre. Tell them to get the understudy for Nana.

MRS. HUDSON

Yes sir.

SALLOWFIELD

I just hope Abbingdon is up on his bark. *(Exits)*

*SFX: Footsteps on the stairs.
BLACKOUT.*

END ACT I

ACT II
Scene 1

SETTING: *BRIAR HOUSE, JOSEPH'S BEDROOM; early afternoon. The rose bush is longer visible in the window.*

AT RISE: *PHELPS in shirt, pants, dressing gown and slippers, is pacing.*

WATSON (*Off*)

Don't worry Miss Harrison, Mr. Holmes will get to the bottom of it.

PHELPS

Watson?

PHELPS springs to the door, opens to reveal ANNIE. WATSON with medical bag, SALLOWFIELD with walking stick and violin case, stand behind her.

ANNIE

Percy. I was just telling—

PHELPS

Come in, come in.

ANNIE enters. PHELPS pulls WATSON into the room. SALLOWFIELD follows.

PHELPS (*Cont'd*)

Oh Watson, I'm beginning to believe that I am the centre of some monstrous conspiracy.

SALLOWFIELD

Conspiracy! Just a moment.

Depositing his walking stick and violin case, SALLOWFIELD pats his pockets and finds a pencil.

SALLOWFIELD (*Cont'd*)

Excuse me just one...

SALLOWFIELD continues to search until WATSON takes the notebook out of his own pocket, hands it over.

SALLOWFIELD (*Cont'd*)

Ah. Now. (*Poised with pencil and notebook*) You were saying?

PHELPS

Uh...I...as far as I know, I haven't an enemy in the world, but after this. I believe it's not my honor at peril but my very life.

WATSON

The facts.

PHELPS

What happened...where to start? What happened was—

ANNIE

Doctor, yesterday evening Percy was feeling so much better we thought—

PHELPS

And thought wrong. But that's the damnable thing, Watson. After your message, I was...I was feeling almost myself. To know that my Uncle is in Paris...perhaps he can intervene, he can...

WATSON

Go on. Last evening...

PHELPS

I dressed and joined Annie and Joseph for dinner. About ten, I began to feel quite sleepy. I begged Annie not to keep vigil. I felt I could...

SALLOWFIELD

(*Scribbling in the notebook*)

Felt you could...?

WATSON

You went promptly to sleep.

PHELPS

Yes. But late, late in the night, I suddenly awakened.

WATSON

At what time?

PHELPS

I don't know. I heard a noise.

ANNIE

When he roused me, it was nearly two.

WATSON

Very good. What was the noise?

PHELPS

It...I thought it sounded like a mouse or something. Gnawing inside the wall. Then I realized it was coming from the area of the window. And then a sharp metallic...uh...

SALLOWFIELD

Clank.

WATSON examines the window.

PHELPS

No, more like a—

SALLOWFIELD

Click.

PHELPS

No.

WATSON

(Flipping the casement latch)

This.

PHELPS

Yes!

WATSON

(Examining the casement)

Someone has forced a sharp instrument between the casements.

PHELPS

I lay there, utterly frozen, waiting. It seemed like an hour.

SALLOWFIELD

And then?

PHELPS

The air. I knew the window was being opened. By God! I sprang out of bed. And... and... there was a shape. A man!

WATSON

Could you make out the face?

PHELPS

It was dark. A bit of moonlight, but it happened so quick. He turned and ran.

WATSON

And you saw nothing else.

PHELPS

I think. Let me think. As he turned there was a glint of light. God help me, I think he had a knife. God! Did he come to kill me?

SALLOWFIELD

He brought the proper tool for it.

WATSON

Holmes!

PHELPS

Why? What have I done? Where should I go?

WATSON

You're safe now. You went immediately to call Miss Harrison?

PHELPS

No. I was afraid to move. I was afraid he was still... I listened. I don't know how long.

WATSON

Miss Harrison, when you were awakened?

ANNIE

I went to Joseph. He was sleeping in the guest wing.

WATSON

And...?

ANNIE

He got his hunting rifle and searched the grounds.

WATSON

And nothing.

ANNIE

No. He is out again just now.

WATSON

(Leans out the window, looks at the ground, gazes up)

You have a heavy fence. Was the gate locked?

ANNIE

I'm sure. As always.

SALLOWFIELD

(Joining WATSON at the window)

Let me see. Oh. Someone trampled the roses.

WATSON

(To ANNIE)

Who else was in the house last night?

ANNIE

The servants come in by day, so no one.

WATSON

(To PHELPS)

Did you lock this door last night?

PHELPS

A habit of mine. Always. Even at my own flat. *(To ANNIE)* Is that silly?

ANNIE

N...no. No.

PHELPS

I feel...well...there I am, completely unconscious. Anyone could—

JOSEPH

(Appearing outside the window)

Gentlemen.

PHELPS

Ah!

ANNIE

Joseph! You startled us.

JOSEPH

I saw the gentlemen arrive.

WATSON

Mr. Harrison, if you please, the ground—

JOSEPH

Oh. Am I standing on evidence? I just thought... *(Holding up a broken piece of a wooden fence)*... thought you might like to see this. Top of the fence by the road has been splintered. Where our visitor scrambled over no doubt.

JOSEPH hands the wood to SALLOWFIELD who sniffs it.

WATSON

By the road. Bold to go over where someone might see. (*Takes the wood, fingers the broken edge*)

JOSEPH

Not much traveled at night. As a rule.

WATSON

Hmm...well. Did you notice any footmarks? At the fence or—

JOSEPH

Nothing.

SALLOWFIELD

I should make sure of that. (*Takes out his magnifying glass*)

WATSON

Yes. do. Mr. Harrison, would you show Mr. Holmes the fence, take him around the grounds.

JOSEPH

I don't see what good...but, if you wish.

SALLOWFIELD

Here I come.

HARRISON steps back as SALLOWFIELD climbs through the window. Both disappear.

PHELPS

Watson?

WATSON

A moment. (*Pause; studying the wood splinter*) All right. Yes?

PHELPS

Mr. Holmes doesn't think this intrusion was merely a coincidence.

WATSON

I don't know.

ANNIE

What I wonder—

PHELPS

Dear—

ANNIE

I'm sorry darling. Doctor, why would a burglar come around to this window? Considering the empty rooms at the other side of the house. The French doors into the garden.

WATSON

You have a logical mind, Miss Harrison.

ANNIE

I—

PHELPS

If I hadn't awakened, I should have been murdered in my bed.

WATSON

Excuse me a moment. *(Exits by the door, leaving it open)*

PHELPS

He has no idea. Neither of them do. I certainly don't see the brilliant Mr. Holmes portrayed in those stories you like so much.

ANNIE

They are kind to put forth such an effort.

PHELPS

What time is it? Has there been any word from my uncle?

ANNIE

Nothing.

PHELPS

Watson's wrong. My uncle...He's given me up. I won't have anything until the treaty is exposed. Then I'll hear, make no mistake, THEN I'll hear from him.

ANNIE

(Taking his hand)

Darling, you do know that whatever the outcome—

PHELPS

(Pulling away)

Outcome? My ruin will be the outcome.

WATSON appears outside the window, holding a branch of the rose bush. He plucks a shred of black cloth from it.

WATSON

Percy, was your man wearing black?

PHELPS

I don't know. I don't know!

WATSON

(Climbing in the window)

This burglary may have no connection to the case at hand. But then... *(Drifts into thought)*

ANNIE

Yes?

WATSON

Percy, you must come up to London with Holmes and I.

PHELPS

Now? Why?

WATSON

We need you to...ah...retrace your movements on Tuesday evening.

PHELPS

But I gave you a full account.

WATSON

Yes, but there are one or two points. One night only.

PHELPS

Insane.

WATSON

Trust me

PHELPS

Very well. *(Sigh)*

PHELPS turns, removes the dressing gown, locates his shoes, puts them on, pulls his jacket out of the wardrobe, puts it on.

ANNIE

(To WATSON)

I will come. If...

WATSON

(Pulling ANNIE aside)

Miss Harrison. I...ah...Mr. Holmes has a plan and we need your help.

ANNIE

If I can?

WATSON

You must stay here, in this room, for the rest of the day. Through dinner, until you retire for the night. Can you do that?

ANNIE

Joseph will wonder.

WATSON

Make whatever excuse you must, but do not stir. That is of utmost importance. When you go up to bed, leave this window unlatched but lock the door and keep the key. Do you understand?

ANNIE

I think...yes.

*JOSEPH and SALLOWFIELD pass by
outside the window.*

WATSON

Do exactly as I ask and we may bring this entire ordeal to a good conclusion.

PHELPS

(Ready to go)

What are you two whispering about?

WATSON

Ah...your lady was giving the Doctor instructions for your care in London.

PHELPS

(To ANNIE)

Instructions you didn't want me to hear?

ANNIE

(Playfully)

Did you want to hear yourself spoken of as a little child?

PHELPS

Bah!

SALLOWFIELD

(Appearing in the window; to off)

Thank you, Mr. Harrison. I'll be along in a moment. Watson look at this. *(Holds up a cigar butt)*

WATSON

What've you got?

SALLOWFIELD

(Climbing in the window)

An important clue. As it happens, I have written a monograph on a hundred and fifty types of cigar and cigarette ash.

ANNIE

That's probably...the gardener smokes incessantly. We close up all the windows when he works near the house.

WATSON

(To SALLOWFIELD)

You can test that in your laboratory at Baker Street.

SALLOWFIELD

No need. *(Tosses the cigar butt out the window)*

PHELPS

(To SALLOWFIELD)

What else did you find?

JOSEPH

(Appearing in the doorway)

Nothing more.

SALLOWFIELD

Yes, I'm afraid your burglar is well gone.

JOSEPH

And without the family heirlooms.

PHELPS

If that's what he was seeking.

ANNIE

(Collecting PHELPS' medicines)

Joseph, would you have a small bag Percy could borrow.?

JOSEPH

What's this?

WATSON

He's coming to inspect his office.

SALLOWFIELD

But there's nothing there?

WATSON

(Glaring at SALLOWFIELD)

Something. We. Missed.

SALLOWFIELD

But...well, possible.

JOSEPH

(Going to the wardrobe)

I have a small traveling case.

PHELPS

I'll return it with your other things. I'm much obliged.

WATSON

You won't go back to your cold flat. Holmes and I will give you a friendly bed for the night and the finest breakfast Mrs. Hudson can conjure.

PHELPS

I'm not sure—

JOSEPH

Seems a good plan. *(Takes a folded nightshirt from a drawer, holds it up)* A nightshirt?

WATSON

Excellent.

JOSEPH stuffs the nightshirt into the case, hands the case to ANNIE who adds the medicines.

JOSEPH

The carriage is still at the gate. I'll summon the coachman.

WATSON

Then we're off.

SALLOWFIELD

(Collecting his walking stick and violin case)

Wait. All right.

WATSON, SALLOWFIELD and PHELPS exit.

JOSEPH

Come Annie, go with them to the station and then Baylor can take you for a long ride in the country.

ANNIE

I'd, uh...I'd rather take the opportunity to straighten this room.

JOSEPH

Silly, that's Hilda's job.

ANNIE

Of course, but I've...Actually I have a bit of a headache. I think I'd like to sit and read. The room is so cool.

JOSEPH

But—

ANNIE

And I 'd like to spend the evening in prayer. In this room of so much misery, I will ask that we will put all this behind us, my dear will be restored to his place. Do you mind?

JOSEPH

No...well, no.

ANNIE

Darling Joseph. I promise your room will be restored to you in the morning. Go, the gentlemen are waiting.

JOSEPH exits, ANNIE picks up, from the bedside, a copy of The Strand, sits, turns to a page, reads.

ANNIE (*Cont'd*)

"Being a reminiscence of Doctor John Watson." Doctor Watson. I think your accounts of Sherlock Holmes are terribly exaggerated. And you give yourself much too little credit.

As ANNIE reads, LIGHTS FADE OUT.

ACT II

Scene 2

SETTING: *Same, JOSEPH'S BEDROOM, night. The room is dark except for the moonlight through the window.*

AT RISE: *The moonlight reveals ANNIE, asleep in the armchair. An unlit candlestick sits on a small table next to her. The door opens. JOSEPH enters quietly with a lamp.*

ANNIE

Yes? Oh. What time is it? Joseph?

JOSEPH

Ah...nearly eleven.

ANNIE

The candle's gone out. I was...I'll go up, as soon as I gather myself.

JOSEPH

I'll wait with the lamp.

ANNIE

(Going to the window)

Thank you. Joseph, I...I want you to know I am mindful of how you care for me. *(Slowly, silently opens the latch, quickly draws the curtains)* You work so hard to see to the finances and the house and everything.

JOSEPH

No matter.

ANNIE

(Turning)

I ought to take more of the responsibility.

JOSEPH

But soon you'll be off to London.

ANNIE

When I marry.

JOSEPH

Yes.

ANNIE

Well...

JOSEPH

Come now.

JOSEPH starts out the door. ANNIE stops to take the key out of the lock on the inside of the door.

JOSEPH *(Cont'd)*

What are you doing?

ANNIE

Oh. I...I want to... *(Puts the key in the outer lock)* If the burglar comes back, this door will be locked so he...so he can't roam the house

JOSEPH

But—

ANNIE

Indulge me, I was so frightened.

JOSEPH

(Sigh)

Very well.

JOSEPH, ANNIE exit. SFX: The sound of the door being locked. A moment. The window slowly opens, pushing the curtains aside SALLOWFIELD and WATSON appear in dim light of a lantern. THEY climb clumsily into the room. WATSON carries the lantern. SALLOWFIELD, in the deerstalker cap, is hampered by his violin case and walking stick.

WATSON

You brought the violin?

SALLOWFIELD

I couldn't leave it at the station.

WATSON hands SALLOWFIELD the lantern then closes, latches the window and opens the curtain

WATSON

Might have been prudent. We'll have to hide under the bed.

SALLOWFIELD

(Setting the lantern on a table)

You actually think he'll come again?

WATSON

With Percy gone, he won't hesitate.

SALLOWFIELD

A weak fellow, your friend. He nearly wept when you said he was riding up on his own.

WATSON

Shhh, hurry.

WATSON and SALLOWFIELD crawl under the bed.

SALLOWFIELD

(Off, out of sight)

Ah! What's that?

WATSON

(Off, out of sight)

It's me. Ouch. Is that the fiddle?

SALLOWFIELD

(Off, out of sight)

Sorry.

WATSON

(Peeking out)

Where is that light coming from?

SALLOWFIELD

(Peeking out, dislodging the deerstalker on his head)

The lantern.

WATSON

Get it.

Tossing the deerstalker under the bed, SALLOWFIELD creeps out, grabs the lantern, blows it out, and scurries back.

WATSON

(Off, in dark)

Ow.

SALLOWFIELD

(Off, in dark)

Sorry.

WATSON

(Off, in dark)

Shhh!

A long moment. A crunching sound. In the faint moonlight, a DARK FIGURE appears at the window, pushes on it, grunts. WATSON's head appears from under the bed then quickly disappears again. There is a scratching sound and the latch flips up. SALLOWFIELD's head appears then disappears. The FIGURE pushes the window open, climbs in, goes straight to the candle and lights it. HE moves the armchair, small table, out of the way, sets the candle on the floor, and then crouches in the corner. HE takes out a small knife and carefully pries a section of the baseboard away from the wall.

Go!

WATSON (Cont'd)

The FIGURE shoves the baseboard back into place. WATSON scrambles out from under the bed, the violin case skids out the other side, followed by SALLOWFIELD and his walking stick. THEY catch the FIGURE as he reaches the window, THEY fight.

Avast, you blackguard.

SALLOWFIELD

Sallowfield! He has a knife!

WATSON

That's all right, I've got a sword. (*Struggles to remove the blade from the walking stick*)

WATSON

(*Rushing forward*)
Watch out.

The FIGURE thrusts at WATSON, striking his hand.

(*Clutching his hand*)
Ow! Damn it all.

WATSON (Cont'd)

The FIGURE starts toward the window, stumbles over the violin case, picks it up.

As SALLOWFIELD grabs him, the FIGURE hits him over the head with the case. WATSON moves in to break SALLOWFIELD's fall. The FIGURE drops the violin case, climbs out of the window and disappears. A long moment, WATSON and SALLOWFIELD breathe heavily, SALLOWFIELD slides to the floor.

WATSON

Sallowfield!

SALLOWFIELD

I want a word with the choreographer.

WATSON

My friend, are you all right?

SALLOWFIELD

I think. Oh my head.

WATSON lifts the candle to a table. In its glow he inspects his bleeding hand. SFX: The sound of the key in the door lock. ANNIE, in dressing gown, carrying a shotgun, bursts into the room.

ANNIE

(Pointing the shotgun at WATSON)

Stop.

WATSON

Miss Harrison!

ANNIE

Doctor Watson?!

WATSON

Put down the...

ANNIE

(Lowering the gun)

What are you doing? Is that Mr. Holmes?

SALLOWFIELD

I'm all right. What did he hit me with?

WATSON

The violin.

SALLOWFIELD

No! *(Crawls to the violin, rises, places it lovingly on the bed, opens the case)*

WATSON

(To ANNIE)

This was very brave of you.

ANNIE

(Handing over the shotgun)

Take it. It belongs to Joseph, I really don't... Oh, your hand.

WATSON

A scratch.

ANNIE

(Going to the wardrobe for a handkerchief)

What happened? You were going to... Where's Percy!?

WATSON

By now, he's been collected from Waterloo station, fed a good dinner and tucked into bed.

ANNIE

(Tending to WATSON'S hand)

While you put yourself in peril on his account.

SALLOWFIELD

I deduced that the burglar would make a second try. Where's my sword?

ANNIE

And he... he did come.

WATSON

Yes.

SALLOWFIELD finds his walking stick, easily slides the sword in and out.

ANNIE

And escaped. *(Looks around the room, fixes on the chair pulled away from the corner)*

SALLOWFIELD

Got clean away, the blighter. *(Puts down the walking stick, picks up the violin, tunes)*

ANNIE

(*Shaken*)
Doctor...?

WATSON

(*Looking at ANNIE*)
Sallowfield, put that away.

SALLOWFIELD opens his mouth to speak, sees he's being ignored, shrugs, lays the violin back in its case.

WATSON

Miss Harrison—

ANNIE

(*To WATSON*)
Why did this person...? Does this have to do with the treaty?

WATSON

You must go back to your bed.

ANNIE

Do you think I could? Tell me—

WATSON

You're shivering. At least go up and dress.

ANNIE

Dress? Oh dear, I'm in my...oh heavens, you must think...

WATSON

I think you are very...prompt.

THEY laugh.

WATSON (*Cont'd*)

(*Warmly*)
Go. Mr. Holmes will soon have answers for you.

ANNIE

I'll rouse Joseph. If he's...I'll...I'll see. (*Exits*)

SALLOWFIELD

"Holmes will have answers"?

WATSON

Quick! (*Takes the candle to the corner*)

SALLOWFIELD

What are you doing?

WATSON

When a man crouches in a corner in the middle of the night, he's not inspecting for mice.

*WATSON feels along the baseboard,
finds the loose section, pulls it away from
the wall.*

WATSON (*Cont'd*)

Yes! (*Reaches in and pulls out a sheaf of papers tied with a ribbon*)

SALLOWFIELD

My word. Is that—?

WATSON

(Slipping off the ribbon, reading)

It is.

SALLOWFIELD

Eureka! All of it?

WATSON

We'll need Percy or Lord Holdhurst, but I think so, yes.

SALLOWFIELD

But wait, that means... Watson...

WATSON

Yes?

SALLOWFIELD

The burglar. He must be the one who put it there.

WATSON

Elementary

SALLOWFIELD

(Pacing)

Elementary. But... why hide it in the very room of the very man he stole it from unless... Wait. Phelps. He had it all along. He brought it in here, he opened up the wall, he hid the treaty, until he could... Wait.

WATSON

Sallowfield—

SALLOWFIELD

When did he hide it? That first night he was off his head. Wait. He was acting. Wait. Miss Harrison sat by every minute. Wait. He had a clear chance last night but he went to sleep. Wait. It was the maid, no, the gardener. Wait. No. Wait.

WATSON

(Laughing)

When the impossible is eliminated—

SALLOWFIELD

But it's all impossible.

WATSON

Never mind, old Percy and the empire are saved.

SALLOWFIELD

Recovered the treaty, but lost the prey.

WATSON

Rescued a friend and saved the day.

SALLOWFIELD

Ha, ha, very clever. But yes, there is that.

WATSON

Excellent performance, Mr. Holmes.

SALLOWFIELD

(Bowing)

I thank you.

WATSON tries to put the bundle of papers inside a jacket pocket but it doesn't fit.

SALLOWFIELD *(Cont'd)*

Here. *(Takes the papers from WATSON; pauses)* I say, may I direct the final scene?

WATSON

What do you mean?

SALLOWFIELD

The denouement. Breakfast, your flat. Phelps, the fiancée, the skeptical Aunt Eugenia.

WATSON

If you like, but the treaty...

SALLOWFIELD

Will be secure. *(Removes the violin and encloses the papers in the case)*

WATSON

And your violin?

SALLOWFIELD

Not very good at it, do you think?

WATSON

No. I mean, no you play well.

SALLOWFIELD

Oh well, I'll bring it along. *(Pulls the case off a pillow, slides the violin into it)*

JOSEPH *(Off)*

Tell me for God's sake.

ANNIE *(Off)*

Just come.

WATSON

(Hurriedly replacing the baseboard, to SALLOWFIELD)

Silence.

ANNIE and JOSEPH enter.

JOSEPH

What's this? Our burglars?

ANNIE

Joseph, no.

WATSON

No, but you did receive a return visit.

SALLOWFIELD

Which I anticipated.

JOSEPH

But they've gone.

WATSON

It's time to put this in the hands of the police.

JOSEPH

Oh...uh...No. I don't see the need. Looks as if you gave them a thorough thrashing.

SALLOWFIELD

Oh, we did.

JOSEPH

Then I doubt they'll be back.

WATSON

As you say.

JOSEPH

Now, I'm sure you are weary and want to get back to London. I'll take you to the station myself. Annie you should go and be with your intended. When the blow falls—

WATSON

The blow?

JOSEPH

I understood... international calamity?

WATSON

Oh. Yes. Yes, it will be very hard on poor Percy. Miss Harrison do come.

ANNIE

All right.

WATSON

Mr. Harrison, you must join us.

JOSEPH

Oh no. I'll stay to be sure there is no more trouble...and..ah...put my room to rights. I'll get the carriage. *(Exits)*

ANNIE

I'll get my things. *(Exits)*

WATSON

Oh brilliant!

SALLOWFIELD

What?

WATSON

Later. Give me the notebook and get the lantern will you?

SALLOWFIELD hands over the notebook. WATSON finds a pencil, writes.

SALLOWFIELD

(Crawling under the bed)

Uh. Where? Ah there you are.

SALLOWFIELD crawls out, with deerstalker and lantern, sets lantern on the table.

SALLOWFIELD *(Cont'd)*

(Putting on the deerstalker)

Ow! *(Rubs his sore head, stuffs the cap into the pillowcase with the violin)* What are you writing?

WATSON

To Joseph. To ah...to apologize for the state of his room. *(Tears out the page, lays it on the table, picks up the lantern, offers the notebook)* Do you want your notes?

SALLOWFIELD

No, no. You'll need them when you write your account for The Strand.

WATSON

Not of this adventure.

SALLOWFIELD

No villain in the dock. No satisfying conclusion.

WATSON

Uh...Yes. That's right. *(Picks up the violin case)* So. How will you stage your finale?

SALLOWFIELD

(Picking up his walking stick and the pillow case)

Oh Watson, you know my methods.

*WATSON smiles, slaps him on the back.
SFX: The sound of carriage stopping outside. ANNIE appears in the doorway.*

ANNIE

(Pulling on her gloves; frowning)

Gentlemen. Ready?

THEY exit. LIGHTS DOWN.

ACT II
Scene 3

SETTING: *WATSON'S FLAT; Morning. The deer-stalker cap is on the marble bust, the science equipment has been replaced by a table, set for five with large covered platter, tureen with lid, other dishes, a ladle, other silver. The door to the hall is open.*

AT RISE: *WATSON sits at his desk writing, his hand bandaged; the broken piece of fence from Briar House beside him. SALLOWFIELD, a large bandage wrapped around his head, poses by the fireplace with the meerschaum pipe.*

WATSON

How's your head?

SALLOWFIELD

Should have nabbed the blighter.

WATSON

Well...

SALLOWFIELD

I am trained in stage combat, but the blocking was all wrong.

WATSON

(Going to the door, calling down the stairs)

Mrs. Hudson!?

MRS. HUDSON *(Off)*

Yes sir.

WATSON

No, don't come up. Just, would you step across and ask your friend at the bank about that inquiry.

MRS. HUDSON *(Off)*

Surely.

SALLOWFIELD

What's that about?

WATSON

A piece of the puzzle.

SALLOWFIELD

Are there more pieces?

WATSON

Just one.

SFX: Steps on the stairs. PHELPS and ANNIE enter.

ANNIE

I hoped the walk would do you good.

PHELPS

It didn't. *(Slings off his coat; slumps in a chair)*

ANNIE

Well then, forgive me. *(Hanging up PHELPS' coat and her own)* Doctor Watson, this is a very interesting borough. Do I understand from "A Study in Scarlet" that Mr. Holmes chose your rooms?

SALLOWFIELD

Did I? Ah yes.

ANNIE

But why do you give the address as 221 Baker Street when you reside at 224?

WATSON

Ah, uh... Not to confuse the reader. We, ah...began at 221 but they razed the building to put up the bank.

SALLOWFIELD

So we came across here.

ANNIE

Forgive me, these lodgings seem rather small for the two of you.

SALLOWFIELD

Well, yes, but—

PHELPS

Augh! Idle fiddle-faddle.

ANNIE

Oh.

PHELPS

No, Annie. I'm sorry, I'm going mad. Any moment word may come and the waiting, the waiting...

SALLOWFIELD

Buck up old man.

WATSON

(To himself)

Yes Tadpole, quit wriggling and grow some...legs

PHELPS

Watson?

SFX: Doorbell.

SALLOWFIELD

Ah, our final guest has arrived.

WATSON

I'll go down. *(Exits)*

SFX: Sound of steps going down.

WATSON *(Off)*

This way.

SFX: Sound of steps coming up.

PHELPS

Who is it?

LADY HOLDHURST *(Off)*

Ahem.

PHELPS

Who?

*WATSON AND LADY HOLDHURST
enter.*

PHELPS *(Cont'd)*

(Leaping to his feet)

Oh God!

ANNIE

Percy?

SALLOWFIELD

Lady Holdhurst, welcome, welcome.

LADY HOLDHURST

Thank you. (*Squinting at PHELPS*) Nephew?

PHELPS

Aunt Eugenia.

LADY HOLDHURST

You look all right.

PHELPS

Thank you...I mean...

SALLOWFIELD

Let me take your wrap.

SALLOWFIELD helps LADY HOLDHURST off with her wrap, hangs it on the rack.

SALLOWFIELD (*Cont'd*)

I don't know if you have met Miss Harrison and of course you remember my right hand, Doctor Watson.

LADY HOLDHURST

(*To ANNIE*)

Young lady. (*To SALLOWFIELD*) You have put me in awkward position, Mr. Holmes. My husband insists that we do not communicate with our nephew until the outcome of this...this incident is determined

PHELPS

Then you haven't...there has been no...

LADY HOLDHURST

Repercussions? Not as yet.

PHELPS groans.

SALLOWFIELD

Then there is still hope. Breakfast is served.

LADY HOLDHURST

I'm afraid I can't stay.

SALLOWFIELD

Oh, please, Lady Holdhurst. Won't you grace me? I've never shared a table with the wife of the future prime minister.

LADY HOLDHURST

You are indulging in fantasy.

SALLOWFIELD

Likely, it's my life's work. But will you?

LADY HOLDHURST

Oh, very well.

WATSON pulls out a chair, gestures to ANNIE. SHE smiles at him, sits. SALLOWFIELD guides LADY HOLDHURST to a seat. WATSON, SALLOWFIELD sit.

SALLOWFIELD

(To LADY HOLDHURST)

So, no word from Paris? Mr. Phelps, I believe the platter is nearest you.

PHELPS

I can't eat. I can't— *(Starts to rise)*

SALLOWFIELD

(Motioning him to sit)

Manners, please. Even in a crisis, we are gentlemen. If you won't indulge then perhaps you'll serve your Aunt and your fiancée.

PHELPS sighs and lifts the cover. On the platter lies the treaty.

PHELPS

Ahhh!

LADY HOLDHURST

What on earth!

PHELPS leaps to his feet, clasps the treaty to his heart, dances around the room, laughing and crying.

WATSON

(Jumping up)

Old man.

PHELPS

I have it, it's safe! Saved, I'm saved! (*Laughs hysterically*)

LADY HOLDHURST

He's gone mad!

ANNIE

(*Rising*)

Percy!

LADY HOLDHURST

(*Rising*)

Do something! Restrain him!

WATSON guides PHELPS back to his chair, where HE collapses. ANNIE leans over, touching his brow.

LADY HOLDHURST (*Cont'd*)

He's dead!

ANNIE

(*Sighs, sits*)

He's fine.

A pause as WATSON takes PHELPS's pulse.

WATSON

Just fainted.

SALLOWFIELD

Hah! I thought I'd killed him.

LADY HOLDHURST

(*Dropping into her chair*)

My lord! My dear lord in heaven. Oh!

WATSON

(*Turning to LADY HOLDHURST*)

Sallowfield!

ANNIE looks quizzically at WATSON. SALLOWFIELD pours LADY HOLDHURST a glass of water.

WATSON

Lady Holdhurst, you may wire your husband to return home. Your nephew is well and the treaty is safe.

LADY HOLDHURST

(Suddenly recovered)

The treaty? Are you sure?

PHELPS gains consciousness.

PHELPS

(Gasping)

Ah....

LADY HOLDHURST

(Looking at SALLOWFIELD)

I think we could have done without the theatrics.

ANNIE

(Looking at PHELPS)

I agree.

PHELPS

Did I dream? *(Looking down at his hands)* It's here. It's here.

WATSON

Is it intact?

PHELPS

(Paging though frantically)

Yes. I believe yes. Where did you find it? How? The thief must be prosecuted.

WATSON

The thief has escaped.

PHELPS

No.

WATSON

Just as well. I imagine Lord Holdhurst would prefer to keep this little incident out of the courts, and the newspapers.

LADY HOLDHURST

He certainly would.

ANNIE

(To WATSON)

But you know who it is.

PHELPS

(*To SALLOWFIELD*)

Do you?

SALLOWFIELD

(*To WATSON*)

Do we?

WATSON

I think Percy should lie down. Miss Harrison, if you would go with him to the other room.

ANNIE

I will not.

PHELPS

I'm all right. Who plotted my downfall? Who is the villain who drove me to madness?

WATSON

(*Looking at ANNIE*)

I'm sorry, it was—

ANNIE

My brother Joseph.

Silence.

ANNIE (*Cont'd*)

I'm right, am I not?

WATSON

I'm so sorry.

PHELPS

Joseph!

WATSON

(*To ANNIE*)

How did you know?

ANNIE

You asked me to stand guard. The treaty was in his room.

LADY HOLDHURST

Whose room is that?

WATSON

The night of the theft. Mr. Phelps and Joseph Harrison traveled down from London. Miss Harrison, what happened exactly?

ANNIE

There was confusion. Percy was...I begged Joseph for his room. He went ahead to light a lamp.

WATSON

And hide the treaty.

ANNIE

Behind the baseboard wasn't it?

WATSON

Yes.

PHELPS

You knew? You knew where it was?

ANNIE

Not until...last night, when I saw...That corner was his treasure trove as a boy. Percy you can't think...

WATSON

Joseph kept his secret well. I expect he planned a journey to Paris as soon as he could retrieve the papers but, Percy, mark this: It was your lady, my friend, who refused to leave the room. It was she who safeguarded not only your health, but your honor as well.

Silence, WATSON looks at ANNIE. SHE smiles, gratefully.

SWALLOWFIELD

Scene and Act. The end.

LADY HOLDHURST

I beg your pardon. Who is this Joseph?

ANNIE

I'm sorry, Lady Holdhurst. He is my brother.

LADY HOLDHURST

With whom you reside.

ANNIE nods.

PHELPS

But what about the burglar?

WATSON

I think, at dinner, Joseph must have put a sleeping powder in your wine.

PHELPS

It was a plot. He plotted to ruin me.

WATSON

Not at the beginning. That evening you were scheduled to meet for dinner and the theater.

PHELPS

That's right.

WATSON

Evidently he missed your message begging off. So, finding himself driving by your office he decides to pop in and collect you.

SALLOWFIELD

The problem of the bell!

WATSON

Finding the office empty, he rings to inquire and while he waits...

SALLOWFIELD

He glances around for something to read!

WATSON

And seizes the opportunity.

LADY HOLDHURST

Confusing, most confusing. How can you know these things?

SALLOWFIELD

The name is Sherlock Holmes. Our business is to know what others do not.

SFX: Knock on the door Standing nearest, SALLOWFIELD opens, takes from MRS. HUDSON a piece of paper, closes the door, reads.

ANNIE

But still...Doctor why? Joseph had to know what he was doing to us...to me.

WATSON

(To SALLOWFIELD)

Is that from Mr. Oliver? *(To the OTHERS)* We asked the bank across to inquire at Joseph's institution.

SALLOWFIELD

He was heavily in debt. Bad speculations, bad women, bad—

WATSON

Stop! Stop! *(To ANNIE)* I'm sorry.

ANNIE

I'm glad to know. Lady Holdhurst, I am so...I'm...

LADY HOLDHURST

None of your fault, I suppose. Sebastian will say it is best forgotten. So, I had better send that wire and relieve his mind. Nephew, when he returns, I'm sure he will want to discuss your future.

LADY HOLDHURST points to the treaty still clutched at PHELP's chest.

LADY HOLDHURST *(Cont'd)*

Are you going to finish that copy or whatever was wanted?

PHELPS

Yes Ma'am. Yes Aunt. Annie I should.

ANNIE

Yes, go with your Aunt. You must.

PHELPS heads for his coat.

ANNIE *(Cont'd)*

But Percy, before you leave, may I...I need to...

LADY HOLDHURST

Take your time, my boy.

WATSON

Lady Holdhurst, if I may escort you to your carriage?

WATSON gets her wrap.

LADY HOLDHURST

Thank you. *(To SALLOWFIELD)* Mr. Holmes, it's been a...an experience.

SALLOWFIELD bows, WATSON helps LADY HOLDHURST with her wrap. They exit.

PHELPS

(To ANNIE)

What was it then?

ANNIE

Percy, I... (*Glances at SALLOWFIELD*)

SALLOWFIELD

Oh...uh... (*Looks around*) Ah!

*SALLOWFIELD puts on the deerstalker, ties the flaps down over his ears, sits at the desk, turns his back and pretends to engross himself in a copy of *The Strand*.*

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

Continue to next page for Props List
Followed by Set Notes

HAND PROPS

ACT I

PROP	CHARACTER	PLACEMENT
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Scene 1 - Watson's Flat

Fountain Pen	Watson	(Set on stage)
Railroad timetable	Watson	(Set on stage)
Pocket watch	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Tray with brandy decanter and glass	Mrs. Hudson	(Set off Stage)

Scene 2 - Watson's Flat

Violin case	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Deerstalker cap	Watson/Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Suit of clothes for Sallowfield	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Medical bag	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Persian Slipper with tobacco	Watson	(Set on stage)
Stack of The Strand magazines	Watson	(Set on stage)
Small notebook	Watson	(Set on stage)
Magnifying glass	Watson/Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Pencil	Watson/Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Penknife	Watson/Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Tape measure	Watson/Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Tobacco Pouch	Watson/Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Meerschaum pipe	Watson/Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Box of matches	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)

Scene 3 - Briar House, Joseph's bedroom

Strand Magazine	Annie	(Set on stage)
Engagement ring	Annie	(Set off Stage)
Telegram	Joseph	(Set off Stage)
Shirt	Joseph	(Set on stage)
Medical Bag	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Notebook	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Violin case	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Violin	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Violin Bow	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Rose	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Water Bottle	Annie/Joseph	(Set on stage)
Water glass	Annie/Phelps	(Set on stage)
Dressing gown	Annie/Phelps	(Set on stage)
Tea Tray, Tea pot, 5 cups, saucers, napkins	Annie	(Set off Stage)
Pill bottle, pills	Annie	(Set on stage)

PROP	CHARACTER	PLACEMENT
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Scene 4 - Compartment on a moving train

Violin case	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Violin	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Violin bow	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
White cloth	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Medical bag	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Small notebook	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Coin for the Porter	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Strand magazine	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Tea tray, pot, cups, plates, ham sandwiches	Porter	(Set off Stage)
Invoice	Porter	(Set off Stage)

Scene 5 - Phelps' room in the Foreign Office

Tape measure	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Magnifying glass	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Small notebook	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Dust mop	Mrs. Tangey	(Set off Stage)
Pocket watch	Watson	(Set off Stage)

Scene 6 - Watson's Flat

Notebook	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Medical bag	Watson	(Set on stage)
Violin in case	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Dressing gown	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Houndstooth greatcoat	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Hangers	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Cloth cover	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Deerstalker cap	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Walking stick/sword	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Meerschaum pipe	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Persian slipper	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Two beakers, one with colored water	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Tray, teapot, cup, saucer, plate, toast rack jelly pot	Mrs. Hudson	(Set off Stage)
Telegram	Mrs. Hudson	(Set off Stage)

HAND PROPS

Act 2

PROP	CHARACTER	PLACEMENT
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Scene 1 - Briar House, Joseph's bedroom

Medical bag	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Notebook	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Branch of rose bush, shred of black cloth	Watson	(Set on stage)
Violin case	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Violin	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Deerstalker cap	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Walking stick/sword	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Pencil	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Magnifying glass	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Cigar butt	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Broken piece of wooden fence	Joseph	(Set off Stage)
Small traveling case	Joseph	(Set on stage)
Folded nightshirt	Joseph	(Set on stage)
Shoes	Phelps	(Set on stage)
Jacket	Phelps	(Set on stage)
Liquid medicines, pill bottles	Annie	(Set on stage)
The Strand magazine	Annie	(Set on stage)

Scene 2 - Briar House, Joseph's bedroom

Candle/candle holder	Annie/Joseph	(Set on Stage)
Door key	Annie	(Set on stage)
Lantern	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Treaty, tied with a ribbon	Watson	(Set on stage)
Pencil	Watson	(Set off Stage)
Deerstalker cap	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Violin Case	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Violin	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Walking stick/sword	Sallowfield	(Set off Stage)
Small knife	Joseph (Dark Figure)	(Set off Stage)
Matches	Joseph (Dark Figure)	(Set off Stage)
Shotgun	Annie	(Set off Stage)
Handkerchief	Annie	(Set on stage)
Pillow case	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Notebook	Sallowfield/Watson	(Set off Stage)

PROP	CHARACTER	PLACEMENT
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Scene 3 - Watson's Flat

Large covered platter with the treaty inside	Phelps	(Set on stage)
Broken piece of wooden fence	Watson	(Set on stage)
Folded paper, bank report	Mrs. Hudson	(Set off Stage)
Engagement ring	Annie	(Set off Stage)
Deerstalker cap	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Copy of The Strand	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Tureen & Ladle	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)

Scene 4 - Watson's flat

Large tray	Mrs. Hudson	(Set off Stage)
Scene 4 Breakfast dishes	Mrs. Hudson	(Set on stage)
Checkbook, check	Watson	(Set on stage)
Fountain pen	Watson	(Set on stage)
Broken piece of fence	Watson	(Set on stage)
Brandy decanter, Glass	Watson	(Set on stage)
Deerstalker cap	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Violin	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Violin Bow	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)
Violin case	Sallowfield	(Set on stage)

SET NOTES

WATSON'S FLAT:

Contains described elements of 221B, but is a very poor facsimile of the room described in the stories.

JOSEPH'S BEDROOM:

1. The wardrobe includes drawers and space for hanging clothes.
2. The Bed sits high enough for Watson, Sallowfield to crawl under.
3. Armchair is placed to block a corner of room.
4. A section of the baseboard in that corner is removable.
5. Preset behind baseboard section, roll of papers, tied with ribbon.
6. Window is large enough for a man to climb through and locks with a prominent latch.

