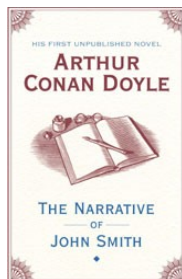




2011

Communication No. 306

The Pleasant Places of Florida



The Narrative of John Smith by Arthur Conan Doyle: The Publication of His Lost First Novel

By [Randall Stock](http://www.bestofsherlock.com/ref/narrative-john-smith.htm), June 22, 2011

<http://www.bestofsherlock.com/ref/narrative-john-smith.htm>

Arthur Conan Doyle wrote his first novel at the age of 23, but he later explained that this manuscript was lost in the mail and the story was never published. In 2004 the British Library acquired a large collection of papers from the Conan Doyle family archives, including an untitled manuscript with much of his first novel. See website for details on the manuscript, its history, and its publication by the British Library in 2011.

Printed Edition Hardcover: 144 pages Publisher: The British Library ISBN-10: 0712358412 ISBN-13: 978-0712358415 Available: October 2011 List Price: US\$15.00 / UK£9.95



IMAGINATION THEATER

Sherlock Holmes. The name conjures pictures of gaslit streets and dark mysteries from a bygone age. Along with his trusted friend Dr. John H. Watson, Holmes is without doubt the most famous

sleuth the world has ever known with countless literary works, stage plays, films, television and radio programs all centering around this icon and spanning over 117 years.

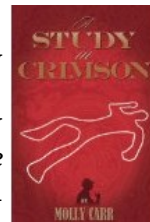
Holmes and Watson find themselves in the most puzzling of crimes in two shocking tales of murder. Can the genius of Holmes solve the unsolvable? Turn out the lights and listen in, your heart will race as our two detectives twist and turn through the dark recesses of your mind in these most mysterious of adventures.

For the first time in over fifty years, the estate of Dame Jean Conan Doyle has authorized new Sherlock Holmes stories to be written and aired on American radio! Jim French has been given the privilege of writing new radio dramas using the classic characters created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The BBC host called the show, "One of the four best radio dramas in the English language!" To bring them to life, French studied the master's original stories and delved into Victorian history. Sherlock, played by John Gilbert and later by John Patrick Lowrie, is depicted faithfully as to age and disposition. And Dr. John H. Watson, played by Lawrence "Larry" Albert, isn't the Hollywood version of a bumbling old fogey here; he's a brave and devoted friend whose help Holmes couldn't do without.

Visit http://jimfrenchproductions.com/zc137m/index.php?main_page=index&cPath=3&page=1&sort=2a

A Study in Crimson

Softcover, MX Publishing, 2010. by Molly Carr



This is the second book in Molly Carr's *Watson – Fanshaw Detective Agency* series. It follows events in *The Sign of Fear* rather directly and continues in much the same vein. Again, Watson natters, Holmes is always out on some sort of business, Lestrade needs help and odd clients turn up in the strangest places (or is that strange clients in oddest places?).

It is difficult to be more specific as the author wanders from situation to situation in a random fashion. Evildoers rush in and take captives, innocents escape miraculously and the police are baffled with a great deal of regularity. Most new clients seem to lead to old crimes and very few people are what (or who!) they seem. For example, "the old Russian woman," cited in *The Musgrave Ritual*, is not really so old, is definitely a woman, and is *still* not who she seems to be.

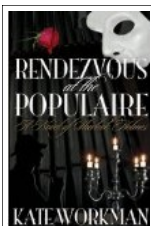
The author continues in her casual attitude toward the Canon. It is hard to keep track of which printed tales actually happened, which were invented by Holmes and who was actually responsible for which crimes. At any given time, it is hard to keep track of which adventure is being investigated, one of the Canonical, but unreal tales or one of the untold, but actual tales. The same uncertainty applies to persons. Black Gorgiano's grandson wanders in from nowhere accompanied by the Pinkerton detective, Mr. Leverton, neither of whom is what he seems to be. The Poirots, pere et fils, turn up with disturbing regularity, again, not whom they seem to be.

Old school chums, and some never known in *any* school, appear and disappear at inconvenient moments. Clients turn into criminals and, of course, criminals into clients. It is not always clear when these changes occur, but occur they do, even if only for a little while. Meanwhile, Mary and the Nipper soldier on while Watson huffs, puffs, (cont. on page 2)



(cont. from page 1) worries, bets on the ponies and runs the odd errand for Holmes. Emily keeps bringing in new clients, some of whom are legitimate and Neville St. Clair seems to have gone straight. At least, he is no longer begging for a living, but what he is really doing is more a mystery than ever.

There is really no point in detailing the events, because I'm sure they will manage to change again before you see this review. Of course, the character set remains the same, or changes as the spirits(?) move them. Scorecards are *not* provided so readers must make up their own lists. Please note that the Circus is not *really* the best place to eliminate criminal pursuers and there is a cave on Long Island, or there was.



Rendezvous at the Populaire

Softcover, MX Publishing, 2011. By Kate Workman

This is the first book in a projected series of Sherlockian tales by Ms. Workman. This tale has a small number of editing errors, mostly misused words or terminology. In any case, editing is not a major concern, as it has been for so many new authors lately. Another characteristic is that the book *reads* as if it had been translated from the French. This is odd, but it has the *feel* of a number of Sherlockian tales I have read that were so translated. Also, a few of the terms used were out of context.

The author credits Sam Siciliano's *The Angel of the Opera* which involves Sherlock with *The Phantom of the Opera* as an inspiration, but I found this book to be more interesting. On the other hand, I never really enjoyed Mr. Siciliano's effort in the first place. For Sherlockians, the Holmes they meet in this book is a new person. The utter self-confidence and disdain for others that pervades the Canonical Holmes is absent here. This Holmes is chastened and unsure of himself.

I have never read the original *Phantom of the Opera*, by Gaston Leroux nor have I ever seen any of the plays built on the character. From that viewpoint, this is a relatively new story for me, so I have no preconceptions or emotional ties to the tale. This book has an original approach to the classic tale and draws serious lines between the characters of Erik and Sherlock. I am unsure of the degree of culpability that Erik's original had, but this book presents him as a sympathetic character whose violence is only used to protect others or to prevent his own destruction.

The plot moves right along and the characters are mostly well drawn. One almost feels that the heroine is really more than a pretty face attached to a pretty voice and

the hero actually attains a sort of stature at the end. I must admit that it took a while to see him as a serious person and I'm not sure that the impression will last. Mostly, this book concerns Holmes and Erik so that their confrontations, both with their own inner demons and with each other are the actual tale told here. The other supporting cast members are mostly interesting and even attractive, in a perverse way. I especially liked the managers, for whom the phrase *dumb as a box of rocks* may have been invented.

As a first effort, this book is good. As a Sherlockian pastiche, it is readable and inventive. The author's vision of Holmes in the grip of misfortunes is compelling. Although it contradicts the Canonical presentation, it presents a number of intriguing points and it seems to have a good amount of legitimacy if one accepts the author's premises. It has become common practice for authors to submit their manuscripts to a group of knowledgeable fans for discussion and error checking before publication. This author would benefit from wider early exposure and discussion. She has talent and good ideas but could use more active discussion in advance of publication.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, June, 2011

TOASTS by Art Walker

At every Sherlock Holmes luncheon, many of us are asked to give a toast to one of the characters in the Sherlock Holmes stories. When I was asked to do so, I gave my toast in the form of a poem or sometimes a limerick. Here are some of them.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

There once was an agent most spoiled,
Who gained from a writer who toiled.
He used his own name,
To capture the fame,
That agent, most wealthy, named Doyle.

221B Baker Street

'Twas here on famous Baker Street
The Master and Doctor shared a suite.
'Twas here that the Master would study a quest,
To determine the solution he thought most best.
'Twas here on famous Baker Street .

Mrs. Hudson

There once was a lady from Baker Street,
Whose care for the Master was bitter-sweet.
Though he praised her for her fine cuisine,
He treated her such as to be quite mean,
To that patient little lady from Baker Street .



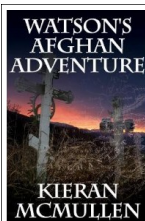
(Cont. from page 2)

Sherlock Holmes

There once was a Holmes named Sherlock,
Who owned a Strad which he fiddled.
He would tune, play, and diddle,
Then stop right in the middle.
His mental powers were no allusion,
For they were helped by a 7% solution.

The Hound of the Baskervilles

From the depths of the dark Grimpen Mire,
Rising slowly; soaring higher,
One hears the fateful sound
Of the fearful Baskerville Hound.
One never walks on the moor at night.
One who did was found dead of fright.
Some who did venture were never found,
Because of that snarling Baskerville Hound.



Watson's Afghan Adventure

Softcover book, MX Publishing, 2010. By Kieran McMullen

This is the only Sherlockian book I know of by this author. It is Watson's own tale of his experiences in Afghanistan. The narrative is a very realistic exposition of a British Doctor's life during the Second Afghan War. I am not sure of the details of the campaigns involved, but the presentation is an accurate and intelligent view of what Watson would have seen and experienced.

The Watson presented here is very much the Watson who wrote the Canonical tales. He is inherently good and caring but also intelligent and observant. Some of the details differ from those in the Canonical accounts but all the disagreements are well explained and logical. The tale told is well written and intriguing, with a variety of characters and locations. The bumbling Watson presented in the Canon, of course, never existed, but this Watson has all the heart and courage displayed in the Canonical tales along with the attention to detail and intelligence required by their author.

Good and evil are displayed by most of the characters. The wide range of the noble aspirations, lofty ideals and gross excesses of the Raj are displayed as well as the nobility, humanity and venality of the native population. Most of the characters are interesting and the story told is a fascinating combination of a treasure hunt and an exposé of the details of the British domination of the subcontinent. As

ever, Watson maintains his ideals, observes his fellow travelers and tries to help whomever and wherever he can.

There are a few irritating details in editing that occur throughout the book. Most are substitution of homonyms for the proper spellings but there are also a few specific misusages and errors in details. A careful edit should catch the majority but they are, at most, a minor distraction. In a literature that is plagued by poor editing and gross misspellings the errors in this book are truly small change. Some purists may disagree with the details of Watson's history provided, but no real violations of the Canon are included. This is an interesting and thought provoking addition to the Canon that is well worth reading. Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, June 2011

Shadowfall: A Novel of Sherlock Holmes

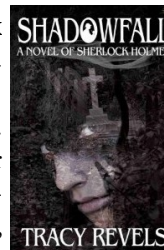
Softcover book, MX Publishing, 2011. by Tracy Revels

This book is a first novel by Ms. Revels. She has previously confined her Sherlockian efforts to a series of parodies, many in the form of radio scripts, which were recently published as *Sherlock Holmes: Mostly Parodies*. She has a patently wicked sense of humor and is a great favorite among the readers of *The Gaslight Gazette*.

This novel begins with Dr. Watson unexpectedly walking in on Holmes while he is being solicited for help by Titania, the queen of the Sidhe. The fact that Titania is beautiful, nude and fully winged adds to Watson's surprise. From that point on, the book varies sharply for the commonplace world of Victorian London. It is full of lively, entertaining, fearsome and frantic characters. In fact, the feeling of the book is very much that of *The Sign of Four*. Odd persons wander in and out of the tale, mysteries abound but Holmes always seems to know what he is doing.

There are at least four characters drawn directly from traditional accounts who dominate the action of the book. Each has individuality and oddities of nature and each was pivotal in their own time and place. Further, the fantastic nature of the events and subject matter do not really penetrate the reader's sense of time and place for some while. These odd events are happening in the familiar London of the Canon; foggy streets, seedy theatres, steel rimmed carriage wheels and all. Inspectors Lestrade and Gregson are pre-empted by the government and Holmes and Watson are summoned to Windsor castle by a faithful retainer to receive their orders.

It is only in the late chapters that the oddities at last become overwhelming. Until (cont. on page 4)





(cont. from page 3) the final scenes begin to unfold, we could be in the midst of any Canonical adventure except for the occasional oddity along the way. The ending is both technically satisfying and emotionally unsettling. The magical inconsistencies now become wildly apparent and Holmes has become an object of some wonder and fear. Watson, however, remains Watson, British to the core, as he quietly completes his obligations and his narrative.

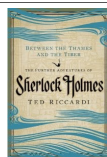
This is a comforting and disquieting book all at the same time. The sense of 1895 is so strong that it overwhelms the strangeness introduced by the preternatural elements for most of the narrative. Holmes and Watson work together with the familiar combination of trust and knowledge that fill the Canon but are finally separated by their own natures and circumstances. It is odd and familiar, comfortable and unsettling. It is just, as I suppose, as the author planned it to be.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, June 2011

Between the Thames and the Tiber

Hardcover, Pegasus Crime, New York, 2011

By Ted Riccardi



This is the second collection of Sherlockian tales by this author. I reviewed his earlier collection, *The Oriental Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in 2003, when it was published. This group of stories, unfortunately, does not measure up to his earlier effort. The Oriental tales were full of rich color and intriguing characters. The present tales are novellas and short stories that seem to consist more of nasty characters and problems in timing and nomenclature than of color and life.

After a Preface that explains the presence of Holmes and Watson in Italy, we are presented with *An Affair in Ravello*, a novella about Sir Jaswant and Lady Singh and some odd events that take place at their villa near Naples. This story also introduces Lady Singh's sister, Lady Maxwell who is supposed by the author to be engaged in a long-term relationship with Holmes.

A Case of Criminal Madness is poorly resolved and features some criminal masterminds being fiendish. *The Death of Mycroft Holmes* is a novella that contradicts events in *His Last Bow* and tangles the Holmes brothers in the mess in Sarajevo in August, 1914. *The Case of the Plangent Colonel* is an oddity. It introduces us to Holmes' interest in modern music and musical artists in Italy, but also to another criminal mastermind smuggler.

Porlock's Demise brings a formal end to the Moriarty epic, sort of. It ends with more questions than answers and does not encourage any hopes for resolution. *A Death in Venice* is a novella about the death of Richard Wagner. It is full of musical geniuses and their relations and convolutions and it ends with his American biographer, Mary Burrell, thanking Holmes (cont. on page 5)

CALENDAR SHERLOCKIANA 2011

June - Aug. - Miracle Theatre Co. tours U.K. with *The Death of Sherlock Holmes*, a new play by Bill Scott. Check out www.miracletheatre.co.uk

August 13 - A Scintillation of Scions IV, presented by *Watson's Tin Box*, Owen Brown Community Center, Columbia, MD. Contact Scintillation2011@gmail.com

Sept. 18 - *Buchercon Convention*, St. Louis, MO, bouchercon2011.com

October 13-16 - A Study in Scandal, Toronto Reference Library, Toronto by *The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection*, *The Toronto Public Library* and *The Bootmakers of Toronto*. See <http://www.acdfriends.org/sins-rego.htm>

Nov. 3 - *Gasfitters' Ball*, The Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Queen Victoria. South Pasadena Women's Club. Contact Chrys & Jerry Kegley ccobsla@social.rr.com or cfkovacic@aol.com

Nov. 4 - PPoF 35th Annual Fall Gathering. *Showcase Arts Foundation Inc.* headquarters, 2664 Enterprise Rd Suite B1, Clearwater, FL (Turn south off of 580, behind Kmart). Details forthcoming on ppofl.net

Nov. 11-13 - *From Gillette to Brett* conference, Indianapolis, IN. See <http://www.wessexpress.com/html/g2b3.html>

December 16 - *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* release date (sequel to *Sherlock Holmes* Downey/Law)

2012

January 11-15 - Sherlock Holmes Birthday Weekend (extended) NY, NY

April 27-29 - MALICE DOMESTIC XXIV

August 31-Sept. 3 - *Sherlock Holmes: Behind the Canonical Screen* Los Angeles, CA.

September 9-16 - *The Sherlock Holmes Society of London Swiss Pilgrimage*, Interlaken & Meiringen, Switzerland.

October 4-7 - *Bouchercon XLIII*, Cleveland, OH.

He's Everywhere... Find souvenir items at The Sherlock Holmes Outpost in Fort Davis, Texas at <http://www.teamyellow.net/SherlockHolmesOutpost/collectibles.htm>. Mrs. Hudson's dining room boasts "the best food west of London" and you can quench your thirst at Dr. Watson's Club after saying the required secret password... *Camden House*, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* has a great website for the Canon and artwork at <http://ignisart.com/camdenhouse/canon/index.html> ... Recently reported in *Ineffable Twaddle*, the newsletter of *The Sound of the Baskervilles* (see www.soundofthebaskervilles.com), there is a song called *Dr. Watson and Mr. Holmes* written in 1934 by Bernie Hanighen and Johnny Mercer. You can check it out at www.youtube.com/watch?v=2u04g7RuMz4 ... check out Mrs. Hudson's blog at <http://mrs-hudson.com/Blog/Blog.html> ... When the crew of TV's *Leverage* had to attend a murder mystery party wherein participants were to dress as detectives, one (cont. on page 5)





(cont. from page 4) for the information that he put in her way. *The Case of the Two Bohèmes* is a novella that involves Holmes with the creators of La Bohème and in the complex lives of the musical colony in Italy, neither of which seem worth the trouble.

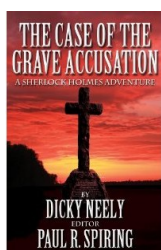
The Case of the Vermillion Face is another novella that brings Holmes into the service of a dying Leo XIII when a papabile Cardinal disappears. The investigation uncovers more than I really wanted to know about early 20th Century Vatican politics. *The Case of Isadora Persano* completely ignores the original citation in *The Problem of Thor Bridge* and tells an entirely different story in a dull fashion that involves Spiritualism and contradicts the Preface as well. *A Singular Event in Tranquebar* also tells a confused tale. Holmes deduces everything and explains it all in even more confusing fashion.

The Case of the Missing Lodger introduces an old friend of Watson's who conveniently dies and presents a mystery to Holmes. The solution involves grave robbing and hidden treasure. *The Mountain of Fear* reintroduces the Singhs and adds a variety of frills and dressing. I lost track somewhere along the line and I suspect the author did so as well.

This collection is a real disappointment. Borrow it from a library and buy it only if you like it. Perhaps you would like to buy my copy.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, July 2011

(cont. from page 4) of them (Sophie Devereaux) dressed as Irene Adler. And yes, there were numerous Sherlocks in attendance at the party. My favorite, though, was dressing Tim Hutton like Ellery Queen. Tim's father, Jim Hutton, played EQ on the TV series... June 2011 *Discover* magazine has a story by Tony Dajeb titled *Vital Signs* concerning diagnosing a recurring patient to the E.R. The doctor states at one point "Nice work, Sherlock."



The Case of the Grave Accusation

Softcover, MX Publishing, London, 2011

Author: Dicky Neely Editor: Paul R. Spirling

Mr. Neely published the main portion of this book in *The Coastal Bend Sun*, a defunct Texas newspaper, in 2002.

For this book, he made adjustments to the story and added illustrations. Mr. Spirling added a section of comments that summarize the contacts between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Bertram Fletcher Robinson between the publication of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and Robinson's death.

The basis for this pastiche was a series of allegations by Rodger Garrick-Steele issued in 2000. These

were essentially that Doyle plagiarized the Baskervilles story from Robinson and then, when Robinson threatened to expose him, Doyle seduced Mrs. Robinson and conspired with her to poison her husband. Of course, these charges caused a minor furor but eventually died from a lack of any proof and all the evidence of a continuing friendship between Doyle and Robinson. Mr. Neely wrote the novella in 2002 as a response to these allegations. Mr. Spirling, credited as editor, compiled and listed a series of citations that indicate the continued long-term good relations between Doyle and Robinson up to the time of Robinson's death in 1907.

The fictional element of this book has Holmes and Watson recalled from honorable retirement as fictional icons to investigate a matter that is vitally important to their existence. This is the charge of plagiarism against Doyle, which cast the entire literature of Sherlock Holmes into doubt. The investigation is carried on in the 21st Century, so Holmes and Watson need to orient themselves and to adapt to the information sources and other technologies available to them in this time and place.

Surprisingly, the investigation is carried out in a typical Sherlockian fashion, with Dr. Watson manfully but confusedly helping Holmes and a Scotland Yard Inspector providing the necessary back up. The adjustment problems Holmes and Watson face are taken in stride and the standard Doyle cast make guest appearances. The villain of the piece is a fictional character who is nursing several problems along with a need for recognition. He is induced to recant and to channel his energies into more acceptable efforts.

Mr. Spirling's efforts have produced a careful list of public appearances, comments and citations that illustrate the friendly and extended relations that existed between Doyle and Robinson. There are also personal communications, shared events and joint appearances of various sorts that occur all through the period between the publication of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and the death of Mr. Robinson. So the thesis that Robinson had become upset with Doyle is contradicted time and again, right up to his last writings before his death.

The book is short, but well done. It will effectively nail the lid onto the coffin of any plagiarism charges against Doyle for using Robinson's local tale as an inspiration for his story. Robinson was fully and completely credited as the source of the Baskervilles Legend and used that credit, from time to time, to promote his own career, rather than holding it against Doyle.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, July 2011

The Pleasant Places of Florida

(founded in 1972)

Rev. Leslie Marshall, B.S.I. 1972-1977
Dr. Benton Wood, B.S.I. 1977 - 1988
Bill Ward, B.S.I. 1988 - 1989
Dr. Benton Wood, B. S.I. 1989 -1996
The Last Court of Appeals 1997 - present

For the Record:

THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS

David McCallister, *Master of the House*,
most gatherings, host of the annual Wessex Cup)

(Master of Ceremonies at

Carl Heifetz, *Representative (both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople)*,
(Correspondent)

Wanda & Jeff Dow, *The Papers on the Sundial*,
Website and Bookkeeping)

(Communications,

Mike Bryan, *The Unopened Newspaper*,
The Marshall Wood Fund)

Film Festivals and

Please make note of the issue number on your mailing label. This will be the final issue number of your paper newsletter. Due to increased costs and for ecological reasons, we are phasing out printed newsletters. Please go to our website at <http://ppofl.net> for all club news. All newsletters can be found on the site. Those appearing after your issue number can be printed by you from the site if you prefer a printed newsletter.

The Pleasant Places of Florida

U.S.A.

