

The Novel Stage Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: A Study In Scarlet

Based On The Novel by Arthur Conan Doyle

*Adapted
By*

Bart Lovins

The Novel Stage Adventures of Sherlock Holmes:

A Study In Scarlet

by Bart Lovins

Characters

Dr. John H Watson
Sherlock Holmes
Mrs. Hudson
Inspector Lestrade
Inspector Gregson
John Ferrier
Lucy Ferrier
Jefferson Hope
Brigham Young
Stamford
Commissionaire
Constable John Rance
Arthur Charpentier
Madame Charpentier
Alice Charpentier
Hotel Manager
Elder Johnston
Elder Drebber
Elder Stangerson
Elder Kemball
Avenging Angel
Enoch Drebber
Joseph Stangerson
Mormon Woman
Wiggins
Lady In Black
Barkeep - non-speaking
Bar Patrons, Singers, Actors - non-speaking
Hansom Cab Drivers - non-speaking
Train Passengers - non-speaking
Voices - offstage

(All characters may be played by a cast of 10)

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Act 1

Scene 1 - The Criterion Bar, London, Late Afternoon, 1881

(Music 1. Curtain rises. The Actors enter singing 'Drink Old England Dry' - a Capella and setting the stage with four chairs. All set and props other than these are to be pantomimed. Holmes is among the crowd, disguised as a Patron-Actor. With his back to the Audience, the Barkeep serves the carousing Actors from behind the bar. Ambient pub noise in.)

Actors: (Singing) Now, come, me brave boys.

As I've told you before,
Come drink, my brave boys,
And we'll boldly call for more,
For the French, they've invaded us
And say that they will try, will try!
They say that they will come
And drink old England dry.
Aye dry, aye dry me boys, aye dry!
They say that they will come
And drink old England dry.

Watson: (At the bar.) Hello, Barkeep... Yes, if you don't mind... (Seeing the Audience in the mirror behind the bar.) Ah, I beg, your pardon, John Watson. Well, Doctor John Watson, actually. University of London, class of seventy-eight. I've just been discharged from Her Majesty's.

(Barkeep passes Watson.)

Watson: Confoundedly difficult to get service at this time of day, what? You see, I was attached to the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers during the Afghan war...

(Watson catches the Barkeep's attention.)

Watson: Ah! Whiskey, if you please my good man. (Getting his purse.) When I was struck on the shoulder by a jezail bullet. Worn with pain and weak, I was removed to the base hospital at Peshawar, where I came down with enteric fever.

(Bartender returns with Watson's drink and is paid.)

Watson: Ah, thank you my good man. (Sipping) Where was I...? Oh, yes. Well, with my health irretrievably ruined, I was sent back to England...

(The Barkeep returns with change. Watson leaves a paltry tip.)

Watson: And was therefore as free as air, or as free as a retirement of eleven shillings and sixpence a day would permit.

Stamford: (At the bar.) John? John Watson?

Watson: Yes?

Stamford: It's me, Stamford. I was a dresser under you at Bart's back...

Watson: Before the war, yes of course.

Stamford: Whatever have you been doing with yourself, John? You are as thin as a lath and as brown as a nut.

(Stamford whistles. To Watson's consternation, Stamford gets immediate service. Stamford orders drinks. Barkeep serves them.)

Watson: The sight of a friendly face in the great wilderness of London is a pleasant thing indeed to a lonely man. In old days Stamford had never been a particular crony of mine, but now...

(Raising a glass.) I hailed him with enthusiasm and gave him a short sketch of my adventures.

(Stamford and Watson drink as they talk.)

Stamford: Poor devil! What are you up to now?

Watson: Trying to solve the problem as to whether it is possible to get comfortable rooms at a reasonable price.

Stamford: That's a strange thing. You are the second man today that has used that expression to me.

Watson: And who was the first?

Stamford: A fellow who is working at the chemical laboratory up at Saint Bart's Hospital. He was bemoaning this morning that he could not get someone to go halves with him in some nice rooms.

Watson: By Jove! I am the very man for him.

Stamford: You don't know him yet.

Watson: Why, what is there against him?

Stamford: I didn't say that. He is a little queer in his ideas...

Watson: A medical student, I suppose?

Stamford: No... I have no idea what he intends to go in for.

Watson: If I am to lodge with anyone, I should prefer a man of studious and quiet habits. I am not strong enough yet to stand much noise or excitement. I had enough of both in Afghanistan to last me for the remainder of my natural existence. How could I meet this friend of yours?

Stamford: He is sure to be at the laboratory. If you like, we shall go there at once.

Watson: **(Finishing drink.)** Certainly!

(Music 2 in. Sound out. Watson leaves. Stamford downs his drink and races after him. Lights change. The other Actors set the next scene before exiting. Holmes discards his Patron costume to an Actor and remains, his back to the Audience. Action is continuous.)

Scene 2 - A Laboratory At Saint Bartholomew's Hospital

(Holmes rolls up his sleeves and leans over a lab table. Music 2 out. Stamford and Watson talk as they walk.)

Stamford: You mustn't blame me if you don't get on with him.

Watson: Stamford, have you some reason for washing your hands of the matter?

Stamford: It is not easy to express the inexpressible. He's a little too scientific for my tastes, it approaches cold-bloodedness. He appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge.

Watson: Very right too.

Stamford: Yes, but when it comes to beating dead bodies in the dissecting-rooms with a stick...

Watson: Beating the bodies!

Stamford: Yes, to verify how far bruises may be produced after death. But here we are.

(Stamford opens the door. Lights change. Watson enters first.)

Holmes: I've found it! I've found it! I have found a reagent which is precipitated by hemoglobin and by nothing else.

Stamford: Doctor Watson, Mister Sherlock Holmes.

(Holmes grips Watson's hand strongly with a slight twist. His eyes darting from Watson's wrist to his face.)

Holmes: You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive.

Watson: How on earth...?

Holmes: **(Chuckling)** Never mind. The question *now* is about hemoglobin. No doubt Doctor, *you* see the significance of my discovery?

Watson: It is interesting, chemically no doubt, but practically...

Holmes: Why, man, it is the *most practical* medical and legal discovery in years. **(Returning to the table.)** Don't you see that it gives us an infallible test for blood stains? **(A long bodkin in hand.)** Now! Let us have some fresh blood.

(Watson and Stamford hide their hands and step back. Having no volunteer, Holmes instead digs the bodkin into his own finger, draws off a drop of blood, and adds it to a vessel.)

Holmes: I then add this small quantity of blood to a litre of water. You perceive that the resulting mixture has the appearance of pure water. The proportion of blood cannot be more than one in a million. **(Throwing crystals and drops of fluid into the vessel.)** Ha, ha! You see how the contents assume a dull mahogany colour, and a brownish dust precipitates to the bottom of the glass jar? What do you think of that?

Watson: It seems to be a very delicate test.

Holmes: Beautiful! Beautiful! Had this test been invented sooner, there are hundreds of men now walking the earth who would long ago have paid the penalty of their crimes.

Watson: Indeed?

Holmes: A man is suspected of a crime. His linen or clothes are examined, and brownish stains discovered upon them. Are they blood stains, or mud stains, or rust stains, or fruit stains, or what are they? **(Bowing to an imaginary Audience.)** Now we have the Sherlock Holmes' test, and there will no longer be any difficulty.

(Watson alone applauds.)

Stamford: Holmes, we come on business. My friend here wants to take diggings.

Holmes: I have my eye on a suite in Baker Street which would suit us down to the ground. You don't mind the smell of strong tobacco, I hope?

Watson: I always smoke Ship's myself.

Holmes: That's good enough. I generally have chemicals about, and occasionally do experiments. Would that annoy you?

Watson: By no means.

Holmes: Let me see... What are my other shortcomings? I get in the dumps at times and don't open my mouth for days on end. You must not think I'm sulky when I do that. Just let me alone, and I'll soon be right. What have you to confess now? It's just as well for two fellows to know the worst of one another before they begin to live together.

Watson: I object to rows because my nerves are shaken, and I get up at all sorts of ungodly hours, and I am extremely lazy. I have another set of vices when I'm well, but those are the principal ones at present.

Holmes: Do you include violin-playing in your category of rows?

Watson: It depends on the player.

Holmes: **(Laughs)** I think we may consider the thing as settled, that is if the rooms are agreeable to you.

Watson: When shall we see them?

Holmes: Call for me here at noon tomorrow, and we'll go together and settle everything.

Watson: Alright, noon exactly.

(Watson and Holmes shake hands. This time, Watson grips Holmes' hand firmly with a slight twist and makes a few observations of his own. Holmes withdraws his hand defensively and returns to work. Watson leaves. Stamford follows, closing the door.)

Watson: Did you happen to notice his hands?

Stamford: **(Checking his watch.)** What about them?

Watson: They were mottled over with pieces of plaster to stop bleeding cuts and discoloured with strong acids. And then there was the bruising up and down his arms...

Stamford: That's just the start of his little peculiarities.

Watson: **(Rubbing his hands together.)** Oh, a mystery, is he? This is very piquant. I am much obliged to you for bringing us together. "The proper study of mankind is man," you know.

Stamford: You must study him, then. I'll wager though he learns more about you than you about him. Goodbye.

(Stamford exits.)

Watson: **(Aside)** How the deuce did he know that I had come from Afghanistan?

(Music 3 in. Action is continuous.)

Scene 3 - Number 221B Baker Street

(Lights change. Holmes joins Watson. Music 3 out.)

Watson: We met the next day and went over to number two-twenty-one B Baker Street in order to inspect the rooms.

(Mrs. Hudson enters, opens the apartment door and ushers Watson and Holmes in.)

Hudson: **(Presenting the flat's amenities.)** The rooms consist of a couple of comfortable bedrooms and a single large, airy sitting-room, cheerfully furnished, and illuminated by a broad window overlooking the street.

(Mrs. Hudson shakes hands with them both. She exits, closing the door.)

Watson: So desirable in every way were the apartments, and so moderate did the terms seem when divided between us, that the bargain was concluded upon the spot.

(Watson and Holmes busy themselves unpacking and arranging furniture.)

Watson: For a day or two, we were busily employed in unpacking and laying out our property to the best advantage. That done, we gradually began to accommodate ourselves to our new surroundings.

(Music 4 in. Holmes exits to bedrooms. Watson loads and lights his pipe.)

Watson: Holmes was certainly not a difficult man to live with. He was quiet in his ways, and his habits were regular. Nothing could exceed his energy when the working fit was upon him...

(Holmes enters lethargically rolling down his left sleeve, his coat draped over his shoulder. He lies down upon the sofa using his jacket as a blanket.)

Watson: But now and again, a reaction would seize him, and for days on end, he would lie upon the sofa in the sitting-room, hardly uttering a word or moving a muscle. On these occasions, I noticed such a dreamy vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic... **(Dismissively)** had not the temperance and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion.

(Music 4 out. Holmes awakens, catching Watson staring at him. Watson clears his throat and crosses away. Holmes rises with sudden energy, picks up a magazine, and circles an article in it. Lestrade enters.)

Watson: Under my circumstances, I eagerly hailed the little mystery, which hung around my companion, and spent much of my time in endeavouring to unravel it.

(Lestrade knocks at the door. Holmes tosses the magazine to the table and answers the door.)

Watson: During the first week or so, we had no callers. Presently, however, I found that Holmes had many acquaintances and those in the most different classes of society.

Holmes: Ah, Mister Lestrade...

(Lestrade steps in.)

Watson: **(Emptying the contents of his pipe into the fireplace.)** One such acquaintance, a little sallow rat-faced, dark-eyed fellow, came three or four times in a single week. **(Crossing to bedrooms.)** When any of these individuals put in an appearance, Sherlock Holmes used to beg for the use of the sitting-room. And I would retire to my bedroom.

Holmes: **(To Watson.)** I apologize for putting you to this inconvenience but I have to use this room as a place of business, and these people are my clients.

Watson: I was on the point of asking him what that business might be...

(Holmes speaks with Lestrade then shows him out, closing the door.)

Watson: But something in his manner showed me that the question would be an unwelcome one.

(Holmes sits at the table and eats toast.)

Watson: **(Joining him.)** It was upon the fourth of March, as I have good reason to remember, that I rose and found that Sherlock Holmes had not yet finished his breakfast. **(Picking up the discarded magazine.)** I picked up a magazine from the table and attempted to while away the time with it, while my companion munched silently at his toast. One of the articles had a pencil mark, and I naturally began to run my eye through it. Its somewhat ambitious title was *The Book Of Life*, and it attempted to show how much an observant man might learn by a systematic examination of all that came his way. **(Slapping the magazine down.)** What ineffable twaddle! I never read such rubbish in my life.

Holmes: What is it?

Watson: **(Pointing at the magazine with his egg spoon.)** Why, this article. I see that you have read it since you have marked it.

Holmes: Oh?

Watson: **(Working away at the eggshell.)** I don't deny that it is smartly written. It irritates me though.

Holmes: Oh?

Watson: It is evidently the theory of some armchair lounge who evolves all these neat little paradoxes in the seclusion of his own study.

Holmes: Oh?

Watson: (**Pointing with his egg spoon.**) I should like to see him clapped down in a third-class carriage on the Underground and asked to give the trades of all his fellow-travellers. I would lay a thousand to one against him.

Holmes: You would lose your money.

Watson: Oh?

Holmes: As for the article, I wrote it myself.

Watson: (**Smacking thumb with his egg spoon.**) Ow!

Holmes: Yes, I have a turn both for observation and for deduction, theories so practical that I depend upon them for my bread and cheese.

Watson: And how?

Holmes: Well, I have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the world. I am a consulting detective.

Watson: A *consulting* detective?

Holmes: (**Pouring tea.**) Here in London, we have lots of government detectives and lots of private ones. When these fellows are at fault, they come and lay all their evidence before me, and I am generally able to set them on the right scent.

Watson: Do you mean to say that without leaving your room, you can unravel some knot which other men can make nothing of, although they have seen every detail for themselves?

Holmes: (**Drinking**) Quite so.

Watson: This fellow *may* be very clever...

Holmes: I have a kind of intuition that way...

Watson: But he *certainly* is very conceited.

Holmes: Observation with me is second nature.

Watson: Oh?

Holmes: (**Realizing a demonstration is required.**) You appeared to be surprised when I told you, on our first meeting, that you had come from Afghanistan.

Watson: You were told, no doubt.

(Holmes invites Watson to play out their initial meeting.)

Holmes: Nothing of the sort. I *knew* you came from Afghanistan. Here is a gentleman of a medical type, but with the air of a military man; clearly an army doctor, then.

(Watson takes Holmes' hand.)

Holmes: He has just come from the tropics, for his face is dark, and that is not the natural tint of his skin...

(Holmes twists Watson's wrist.)

Holmes: For his wrists are fair.

(Holmes lets go of Watson's hand and circles him.)

Holmes: He has undergone hardship and sickness, as his haggard face says clearly. (**Imitating Watson.**) His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and unnatural manner. So, where in the tropics could an English army doctor have seen such hardship and got his arm wounded? Clearly in Afghanistan.

Watson: It is simple enough as you explain it, but I had no idea that such individuals existed outside of Edgar Allan Poe.

Holmes: Indeed, outside of fiction, there are no crimes and no criminals these days. No man lives or has ever lived who has brought the same amount of study and of natural talent to the detection of crime which I have done.

Watson: I found myself growing increasingly annoyed at his bumptious style of conversation. I thought it best to change the topic.

(Lights change. Watson sees the Commissionaire through the window enter with an envelope, seeking the correct address.)

Watson: (**Pointing to the street below.**) I wonder what that fellow is looking for.

Holmes: (**With a cursory glance out the window.**) Who?

Watson: That rather stalwart, plainly dressed individual looking anxiously at the house numbers. See, he has a blue envelope in his hand. (**Sarcastically**) Evidently, he's the bearer of a message.

Holmes: (**Smirking**) You mean the retired sergeant of the Marines.

Watson: Brag and bounce! He knows that I cannot verify...

(The Commissionaire finds the correct address.)

Watson: Ah, he's caught sight of the number on our door. Holmes little thought of this when he made that random shot.

(Lights change. The Commissionaire knocks at the door.)

Holmes: Enter.

Commissionaire: (Holding up an envelope.) For Mister Sherlock Holmes?

(Holmes accepts the envelope and crosses away to read the message.)

Watson: May I ask, my good man, what your trade may be?

Commissionaire: Commissionaire, sir. Uniform is away for repairs.

Watson: **(Glancing at Holmes.)** And formerly?

Commissionaire: A sergeant, sir, Royal Marine Light Infantry, now retired.

(Watson's jaw drops.)

Commissionaire: No answer?

(Holmes ignores the query.)

Commissionaire: Right, sirs.

(The Commissionaire salutes Watson and exits. Watson returns the salute absent-mindedly, closing the door.)

Watson: How in the world did you deduce that?

Holmes: Deduce what?

Watson: Why, that he was a retired sergeant of Marines.

Holmes: I have no time for trifles.

Watson: Very good then.

Holmes: **(Folding the message closed.)** Excuse my rudeness. You broke the thread of my thought, but perhaps it is just as well. So, you actually were not able to see that that man was a sergeant of the Marines?

Watson: No, indeed.

Holmes: It was easier to know it than to explain why I knew it. If you were asked to prove that two and two made four, you might find some difficulty, and yet you are quite sure of the fact.

(Lights change. The Commissionaire enters and repeats his previous search.)

Holmes: Even across the street, I could see a great blue anchor tattooed on the back of the fellow's hand. That smacked of the sea. He had a military carriage, however, and regulation side whiskers. There we have the Marine. He was a man with some amount of self-importance and a certain air of command. You must have observed the way in which he held his head.

(Finding the correct address, the Commissionaire exits. Lights change.)

Holmes: A steady, respectable man, too, on the face of him, all facts which led me to believe that he had been a sergeant.

Watson: Wonderful!

Holmes: Commonplace, I said just now that there were no criminals.

(Holmes tosses the note to Watson.)

Holmes: It appears that I am wrong. Look at this!

(Watson catches and reads it.)

Holmes: It is from Lieutenant Gregson of Scotland Yard.

Watson: Why this is terrible!

Holmes: It does seem to be a little out of the common.

Watson: Surely, there is not a moment to be lost!

(Watson hands the note back to Holmes.)

Watson: Shall I go and order you a cab?

Holmes: I'm not sure about whether I shall go. I can be, at times, the most incurable lazy devil that ever stood in shoe leather.

Watson: But he begs you to help him.

(Music 5 in.)

Holmes: I suppose I may as well go and have a look. **(Hustling to the door.)** I shall work it out on my own hook. I may have a laugh, if nothing else. Come on then.

Watson: You wish me to come?

Holmes: Yes, if you have nothing better to do.

(Holmes exits.)

Watson: A minute later, we were both in a hansom cab, driving furiously for the Brixton Road.

(Action is continuous.)

Scene 4 - The Hansom Cab Ride To Brixton Road

(Lights change. A Hansom Cab Driver, Watson and Holmes enter. The Driver perches atop a chair back. Holmes sits behind him. Watson sits facing Holmes. The Driver flicks his reins. The horse drawn hansom cab travels on the cobblestone.)

Watson: **(Peering out of the cab window.)** I sat silently, for the melancholy business upon which we were engaged, depressed my spirits. My companion, however, was in the best spirits, and prattled away about Cremona fiddles...

(Music 5 out.)

Holmes: And the difference between a Stradivarius and an Amati...

Watson: You don't seem to give much thought to the matter in hand.

Holmes: No data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment.

Watson: **(Pointing)** You will have your data soon. This is Brixton Road, and that is the house up ahead if I am not very much mistaken.

Holmes: **(Looking out of the window, reaching into his pocket.)** So it is. **(Over his shoulder.)** Stop, driver, stop!

(The Driver stops the hansom, climbs down and opens the door, bowing slightly with his hand out for a tip.)

Watson: Holmes, we're still a hundred yards or so from the address.

(Holmes climbs out of the cab and places a coin in the Driver's hand without making eye contact.)

Holmes: Excellent, we'll finish our journey upon foot.

(The Driver nods, shuts the door and exits. Holmes hands Watson the note.)

Holmes: Here, this is the letter from Gregson. Would you mind reading it to me as we walk?

(Holmes exits. Lights change. Gregson enters.)

Watson: **(Holding the letter up.)** This is the letter which I read to him.

(Watson follows Holmes Offstage. Action is continuous.)

Scene 5 - Number 3 Brixton Road, Shortly After Breakfast

(Drebber enters opposite Gregson.)

Gregson: My dear Mister Sherlock Holmes, there has been a bad business during the night at number three, Brixton Road. Our man on the beat saw a light there about two in the morning, and as the house was an empty one, suspected that something was amiss. **(Setting up the derelict house.)** He found the door off its hinges, and in the front room...

(Gregson directs Drebber to lay on the floor. Drebber nods, takes off his top hat and sets it on the ground before laying down on his back.)

Gregson: Discovered the body of a gentleman, well dressed, and having cards in his pocket bearing the name of...

(Gregson snaps his fingers and Drebber extends his card then assumes a deathly pose; his hands clenched, his arms thrown abroad, his lower limbs interlocked.)

Gregson: **(Reading the card.)** Enoch J. Drebber, New York, New York. **(Pocketing it, looking about.)** There had been no robbery, nor is there any evidence as to how the man met his death. There are marks of blood in the room, but there is no wound upon his person. Indeed, the whole affair is a puzzler. I have left everything *in status quo* until I hear from you.

(Holmes and Watson enter.)

Holmes: **(Pointing at the pathway.)** Except that! If a herd of buffaloes had passed along, there could not be a greater mess.

Gregson: **(Wringing Holmes' hand.)** Mister Holmes!

(Holmes dislodges his hand from Gregson's sweaty grip.)

Holmes: Mister Gregson. **(Gesturing to Watson.)** My colleague, Doctor Watson. **(Pointing at the path.)** No doubt you drew your own conclusions, Gregson, before you permitted that.

(Gregson shakes Watson's hand without making eye contact.)

Gregson: I have had so much to do inside the house. My colleague, Mister Lestrade, is here. I had relied upon him to look after this.

Holmes: **(Sardonically)** With two such men as yourself and Lestrade upon the ground, there will not be much for a third party to find out.

(Watson laughs.)

Gregson: **(Ploughing ahead.)** I think we have done all that can be done. It's a queer case though, and I knew your taste for such things.

Holmes: You did not come here in a cab?

Gregson: **(Confused)** No, sir.

Holmes: Nor Lestrade?

Gregson: **(Confused further.)** No sir.

Holmes: **(Inconsequentially)** Then let us go and look at the body.

(Holmes strides to Drebber.)

Watson: I followed Holmes with that subdued feeling at my heart which the presence of death inspires.

(Lestrade rushes Onstage, vigorously shaking Holmes' hand and then Watson's.)

Watson: Lestrade, lean and ferret-like as ever, was standing by the body and greeted my companion and myself.

Lestrade: **(Clucking)** This case will make a stir, sir. It beats anything I have seen, and I am no chicken.

(Holmes kneels, examining Drebber.)

Gregson: **(Defensively)** There is no clue.

Lestrade: **(Chiming in.)** None at all.

Holmes: **(Pointing to splashes of blood.)** You are sure that there is no wound?

Gregson: } **(Together to their chagrin.)**

Lestrade: } Positive!

Holmes: **(Fingers flying.)** Then, of course, all this blood belongs to a second individual, presumably the murderer, if murder has been committed.

Watson: The grim motionless figure lay crumpled upon the floor. He was finely dressed for a day of travel, no doubt. From the position of his limbs, I ascertained that his death struggle had been a grievous one. On his rigid face there stood an expression of horror and, as it seemed to me, of hatred, such as I have never seen upon human features...

Holmes: **(Sniffing Drebber's lips.)** Hmm, sour?

Watson: In service of Queen and country, I had seen death in many forms, but never had it appeared to me in a more fearsome aspect than in that dark, grimy apartment.

Holmes: **(Glancing at Drebber's shoes.)** Patent leather. He has not been moved at all?

Gregson: No more than necessary for the purposes of our examination.

(Holmes lifts Drebber's hand to check his fingernails.)

Holmes: You can take him to the mortuary now. There is nothing more to be learned.

(Holmes drops Drebber's hand. A ring tinkles out of it, rolling across the floor. Watson snatches it. Gregson and Lestrade rush over to gaze at it.)

Lestrade: There's been a woman here!

Watson: It's a woman's wedding-ring, alright!

Gregson: This complicates matters.

Holmes: **(Drawing their attention.)** You're sure it doesn't simplify them?

(Watson, Gregson and Lestrade swiftly look back at the ring in an attempt to discern some deeper meaning.)

Holmes: **(Irritated)** There's nothing to be learned by staring at it.

(Watson gives the ring to Lestrade. He pockets the evidence and walks away from the others.)

Holmes: What did you find in his pockets, Gregson?

Gregson: **(Pointing to a litter of objects.)** We have it all here, a gold watch and chain, very heavy and solid.

(Gregson hands Holmes the card from his pocket.)

Gregson: A leather card-case, with cards of Enoch J Drebber of New York, corresponding with the EJD upon the linen handkerchief. **(Rattling off the other contents.)** Loose money to the extent of seven pounds thirteen. Two letters, one addressed to E.J. Drebber and one to Joseph Stangerson.

Holmes: To what end?

Gregson: Both letters are from the Guion Steamship Company and refer to the sailing of a boat from Liverpool to the Americas. Clearly, this unfortunate man and Stangerson were about to return together to New York.

Lestrade: **(From the other side of the room.)** *Gentlemen*, if you will! **(Pompously)** Mister Gregson, I have just made a discovery of the highest importance. One which would have been overlooked had I not made a careful examination of the walls. **(Bustling back to that corner.)** Come here.

(They follow.)

Lestrade: Now, stand there!

(Music 6 in. Lestrade strikes a match on his boot and triumphantly holds it up. All are illuminated in red light. Holmes kneels in front to inspect.)

Lestrade: Look at that! **(Reading the dripping red letters upon the wall.)** R-A-C-H-E.
What do you think of that? This was overlooked because it was in the darkest corner of the room, and no one else thought of looking there. The murderer has written it with his - or *her* - own blood. See this smear where it has trickled down the wall! That disposes of the idea of suicide anyhow. And why was that corner chosen to write it on?

(Gregson attempts to interrupt.)

Lestrade: I will tell you. See that candle on the mantelpiece. It was lit at the time, making this corner the brightest instead of the darkest portion of the wall.

(Music 6 out.)

Gregson: **(Deprecatorily)** And what does it mean now that you have found it?

Lestrade: **(Caught off-guard.)** Mean? **(His match burns down.)** Ow! **(Conjecturing)** Why, it means that the writer was going to put the female name, Rachel, but was disturbed before he or she had time to finish. You mark my words, when this case comes to be cleared up you will find that a woman named Rachel has something to do with it.

(Holmes bursts into laughter. Red lighting fades.)

Lestrade: **(Ruffled)** It's all very well for you to laugh, Mister Sherlock Holmes. You may be very smart and clever, but the old hound is the best when all is said and done.

Holmes: **(Rising)** I really beg your pardon! You certainly have the credit of being the first of us to find this out, and, as you say, it bears every mark of having been written by the other participant in last night's mystery. **(Whipping out a tape and a magnifying glass.)** I have not had time to examine this room yet, but with your permission, I shall do so now.

(Music 7 in. Holmes matches action to word. Gregson and Lestrade look on, occasionally getting in his way.)

Watson: As I watched him, I was irresistibly reminded of a pure-blooded well-trained foxhound as it dashes backwards and forwards through the covert, whining in its eagerness, until it comes across the last scent, once even lying flat upon his face, measuring with the most exact care the distance between invisible marks.

(Music 7 out.)

Holmes: **(Leaning over, picks up Drebber's hat.)** They say that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains. **(Rubbing his back.)** It's a very bad definition, but it does apply to detective work.

Gregson: Yes, well...?

Lestrade: What do you think of it all, sir?

Holmes: **(Drebber's hat in hand.)** It would be robbing you of the credits of the case if I was to presume to help you. You are doing so well now that it would be a pity for anyone to interfere.

(Holmes gives the hat to Gregson. Gregson takes it and surreptitiously peers inside.)

Holmes: If you will let me know how your investigations go, I shall be happy to give you any help I can. In the meantime, I should like to speak to the constable who found the body. Can you give me his name and address?

Lestrade: **(Glancing at notebook.)** John Rance, he is off duty now. You will find him at Forty-Six, Audley Court.

Holmes: Come along, Doctor, we shall go and look him up. I will tell you this, gentlemen. There *has* been murder done, and the murderer was a man. He was more than six feet high, was in the prime of his life, wore coarse, square-toed boots and came here with his victim in a hansom cab. In all probability, the murderer had a florid face. These are only a few indications, but they may assist you.

Gregson: **(Incredulously)** If this man was murdered, how was it done?

Holmes: **(Curtly)** Poison. **(Striding off.)** One other thing, Lestrade.

Lestrade: **(Annoyed)** Yes, Mister Holmes?

Holmes: Rache is German for revenge, so don't waste your time looking for Miss Rachel. **(Holmes exits.)**

Watson: Ha!

(Music 8 in. Watson exits, leaving the slack-jawed rivals behind. Lights dim. In the darkness, Lestrade, Gregson and Drebber exit. Action is continuous.)

Scene 6 - The Hansom Cab Ride To Audley Court

(Lights change. Holmes and Watson enter. Jefferson Hope, wearing square-toed boots, enters disguised as a Hansom Cab Driver. Music 8 out.)

Watson: **(Catching up.)** You amaze me, Holmes. Surely you are not as sure as you pretend to be of all those particulars which you gave.

Holmes: **(Pointing to the mud.)** There's no room for a mistake. The very first thing which I observed on arriving there was that a cab had made two ruts with its wheels close to the curb. Now, up to last night, we have had no rain for a week, so those wheels which left such a deep impression *must* have been there either last night or this morning.

(Holmes whistles. Hope opens the cab door.)

Holmes: Since, however, there has been no cab there at any time during the morning - I have Gregson's word for that - it follows that it must have been there during the night. And, therefore, that it brought both the murderer and his victim to the house. **(To Hope as he sits.)** Number Forty-Six, Audley Court.

(Hope closes the door, perches and takes them there.)

Watson: **(From his seat.)** But how about the other man's height?

Holmes: Why, the height of a man, in nine cases out of ten, can be told from the length of his stride. **(Demonstrating the distance between outstretched hands.)** It is a simple calculation, though there is no use my boring you with the figures. I had this fellow's stride both on the clay outside and on the dust within. It was child's play.

Watson: And his age?

Holmes: Well, if a man can stride four-and-a-half feet in square-toed boots without the smallest effort, he can't be quite in the sere and yellow.

(Amazed, Watson shakes his head, wryly.)

Holmes: I am simply applying to ordinary life a few of those precepts of observation and deduction which I advocated in that article this morning.

Watson: What article?

Holmes: My *ineffable twaddle*.

Watson: Oh, yes... *that* article. Well...

Holmes: Is there anything else that puzzles you?

Watson: My head is in a whirl. The more one imagines, the more mysterious it grows.

(Music 9 in.)

Holmes: **(Agreeing)** There *is* a mystery about this which stimulates the imagination; where there is no imagination, there is no horror.