

Cambridge Experience Readers

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Level 5

*Series editor: Nicholas Tims*

# *Sherlock*

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Retold by Richard MacAndrew



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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107621862](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107621862)

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First published 2014

Reprinted 2016

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Printed in Italy by Rotolito Lombarda S.p.A.

ISBN 978-110-7621-86-2 Paperback; legal deposit: M-7296-2014

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Illustrations by Antonio Salazar

Audio recording by BraveArts

Typeset by Óscar Latorre

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**Mycroft Holmes:** Sherlock Holmes's brother

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**Miss Violet Westbury:** Cadogan West's fiancée

**Inspector Lestrade:** a police inspector

**Sir James Walter:** a government expert

**Colonel Valentine Walter:** Sir James's brother

**Sidney Johnson:** a technical engineer at the Woolwich Arsenal

**Hugo Oberstein:** a foreign agent

## BEFORE YOU READ



- 1 What do you know about Sherlock Holmes?  
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- 2 Where do you think the story takes place?  
.....
- 3 Look at the pictures on pages 5–43 and *People in the story* above. Who do you think the people are?  
.....

## The Bruce-Partington Plans

It was the third week of November and a thick yellow fog had settled over London. From the Monday to the Thursday it had rarely been possible from our windows in Baker Street to see even the houses across the street. The first three of these days, Holmes had been patiently studying a subject which had been his hobby for some time – the music of the Middle Ages. But when, for the fourth time, we pushed back our chairs from breakfast and saw the heavy brown mist outside the windows, my friend's impatient and active personality could no longer take this dull existence. He wandered restlessly around our sitting room; he bit his nails; he tapped the furniture nervously; and he complained about the inactivity.

‘Nothing of interest in the paper, Watson?’ he said.

I realised that by anything of interest, Holmes was asking about anything of *criminal* interest. There was the news of a revolution, of a possible war, and of a likely change of government. However, these were of little interest to my companion. The only criminal reports I could find were very ordinary. Holmes sighed impatiently and continued to wander around the room.

‘The London criminal is certainly a dull person,’ he said, sounding like a hunter who can find nothing to shoot. ‘Look out of this window, Watson. See how people suddenly appear, are briefly seen, and then quickly disappear once more into the mist. On a day like this, a thief or a murderer could stroll round London like a tiger in the jungle. No one would see him until he made his move.’

‘There have,’ I said, ‘been a large number of small robberies.’

Holmes muttered something rude and then turned towards me.

‘My abilities demand something far more worthy than that,’ he said. ‘It is fortunate for this community that I am not a criminal.’

‘It certainly is!’ I agreed enthusiastically.

‘Imagine that I had a good reason to want to kill someone,’ continued Holmes. ‘How easy it would be on a day like this! I could suggest a meeting, I could make up an appointment, and it would all be over. It is just as well they don’t have days of fog in countries where murder is common.’

There was the sound of someone knocking.

‘At last!’ cried Holmes. ‘Here comes something to bring some excitement into our lives.’

He rushed over to open the door. It was the postman with a telegram<sup>1</sup>. Holmes tore it open and before long burst out laughing.

‘Well, well! I don’t believe it!’ he said. ‘My brother Mycroft is coming round.’

‘And so ...?’ I asked.

‘And so ...?’ said Holmes. ‘It is like coming across a train in the middle of the road. Mycroft has his rails and he stays on them. His home in Pall Mall, his club, his office in Whitehall – that is where you find him. Once, and only once, has he been here. What disaster can have knocked him off his rails?’

‘Doesn’t he explain?’ I asked.

Holmes handed me his brother’s telegram.

*Must see you about Cadogan West. Coming at once.  
Mycroft.*



‘Cadogan West?’ I said. I had heard that name.

‘It means nothing to me,’ said Holmes. ‘But it is extraordinary that Mycroft should do something so out of character. The moon might as well stop going round the earth. By the way, do you know what Mycroft does?’

‘You told me once that he had some minor position in the British government.’

Holmes laughed.

‘I didn’t know you quite so well then,’ explained Holmes. ‘You have to be careful when talking about government affairs. You’re right in thinking that he works for the government. You’d also be right in a way if you said that occasionally he *is* the government.’

‘What!’ I said. ‘But how?’

‘Well, Mycroft has the tidiest and most organised brain you can imagine,’ replied Holmes, wandering up and down the room again. ‘He can store more facts than any other man alive. The same great powers which I use as a crime detective he uses for the government. Mycroft collects information from every government department. He’s the only person with an overview of everything that’s happening in government. Only he can see the full effect that different courses of action will have. Again and again his word has been responsible for major decisions.’

Holmes stopped walking around and then continued.

‘But he’s on his way here. What on earth can it mean? Who is Cadogan West, and why is Mycroft interested in him?’

‘I’ve got it,’ I shouted. And I searched quickly through the pile of newspapers on the sofa. ‘Yes, here it is! Cadogan West was the young man who was found dead on the Underground on Tuesday morning.’

Holmes sat up straight, his pipe halfway to his lips.



‘This must be serious, Watson,’ said Holmes. ‘A death which has caused my brother to change his habits cannot be ordinary. What in the world can Mycroft have to do with it? The case was unremarkable as I remember it. The young man apparently fell out of a train and killed himself. He had not been robbed, and there was no particular reason to suspect violence. Isn’t that right?’

‘There has been an inquest<sup>2</sup>,’ I said, ‘and a good many fresh facts have come out. Looking at it more closely, I should certainly say that it’s a curious case.’

‘Judging by its effect on my brother, it must be a most extraordinary one.’ Holmes made himself comfortable in his armchair. ‘Now, Watson, tell me the facts.’

‘The man’s name was Arthur Cadogan West,’ I told him. ‘He was twenty-seven years old, engaged to be married, and worked in an office at the Woolwich Arsenal<sup>3</sup>.’

‘A government employee,’ said Holmes. ‘That must be why Mycroft is interested!’

‘Cadogan West left Woolwich suddenly on Monday night,’ I continued. ‘He was last seen by his fiancée, Miss Violet Westbury, who he left suddenly in the fog at about 7:30 that evening. There had been no argument between them and she can give no reason for his action. The next thing heard of him was when his dead body was discovered in London by a railway inspector named Mason, just outside Aldgate Station on the Underground train line.’

‘When?’ asked Holmes.

‘The body was found at six on Tuesday morning,’ I replied. ‘It was lying by the rails close to the station, where the line comes out of a tunnel. The head was badly damaged – an injury which might well have been caused by a fall from the train. The body could only have got on the line that way. If

someone had carried the body down there, they would have gone past the ticket collector at the station. This point seems absolutely certain.'

'Very good,' said Holmes. 'So the man, dead or alive, either fell or was thrown from a train. That much is clear. Go on.'

'The young man was travelling from east to west at some late hour of the night. However, it's impossible to say when and where he got on the train.'

'His ticket, of course, would show that.'

'There was no ticket in his pockets.'

'No ticket!' said Holmes. 'Dear me, Watson, this is very unusual. From my experience, it is not possible to reach an Underground platform without showing a ticket. Presumably, then, the young man had one. Was it taken from him in order to keep secret the station he came from? It is possible. Or did he drop it in the train? That's also possible. I understand that there was no sign of robbery?'

'Apparently not,' I replied. 'There's a list here of his possessions: his wallet, containing a small amount of money; two tickets for the Woolwich Theatre, dated that evening; and a small packet of technical<sup>4</sup> papers.'

'There it is at last, Watson!' said Holmes with a satisfied look on his face. 'The government – Woolwich Arsenal – technical papers – my brother Mycroft – the chain is complete. But, if I am not mistaken, here he comes.'

A moment later the large figure of Mycroft Holmes entered the room. Tall and heavily built, his deep grey eyes were full of understanding, and his expression intelligent.

Close behind Mycroft was our old friend Inspector Lestrade, of Scotland Yard<sup>5</sup> – a thin and hard man. The seriousness of both their faces suggested this was a weighty problem. Mycroft Holmes sat down heavily in an armchair.



‘A most annoying business, Sherlock,’ he said. ‘I hate changing my habits, but I was given no choice. This is a real crisis. I have never seen the Prime Minister so upset. Have you read about the case?’

‘We have just done so. What were the technical papers found on Cadogan West’s body?’ replied Holmes.

‘Ah, that’s the point! Fortunately, the news hasn’t got out. The press would be furious if it did. The papers which this sorry young man had in his pocket were the plans for the Bruce-Partington submarine<sup>6</sup>,’ said Mycroft.

His brother and I waited for him to continue.

‘Surely you have heard of it?’ asked Mycroft.

‘Only by name,’ replied Holmes.

‘You cannot overestimate its importance,’ explained Mycroft. ‘It has been the most jealously guarded of all government secrets. Believe me – the Bruce-Partington submarine is the most important development that the navy<sup>7</sup> has ever seen. The plans are extremely complicated and every effort has been made to keep them secret. There are thirty separate new inventions, each of which is essential to the working of the whole. The only copy of the plans is kept in a special safe<sup>8</sup> in a private office next to the arsenal. There are strong locks on all the doors and windows. Under no circumstances were the plans ever to be taken out of the office. And yet here we find them in the pocket of a dead junior office worker in the heart of London. It’s simply awful.’

‘But – the plans – they have now been returned to you?’ said Holmes.

‘No, Sherlock, no! That’s the problem,’ replied Mycroft, ‘We don’t have all of them. Ten papers were taken from Woolwich. There were seven in the pocket of Cadogan West. The three most important are gone – stolen, disappeared. You must

stop everything else, Sherlock. This is an urgent international problem, which you must solve. Why did Cadogan West take the papers? Where are the missing ones? How did he die? How can this wrong be put right? Find an answer to these questions, and you will have done a good service for your country.'

My friend smiled.

'Well,' he said. 'The problem certainly presents some points of interest, and I shall be very pleased to look into it. Some more facts, please.'

'I've noted down the more essential ones here,' said Mycroft, handing Holmes a sheet of paper. 'And I've noted down a few addresses which you will find useful. The person who is responsible for the papers is the famous government expert, Sir James Walter. He's a man whose love for his country is above suspicion. He's one of two people who have a key to the safe. I should add that the papers were definitely in the office during working hours on Monday, and that Sir James left for London at about three o'clock, taking his key with him. He was a guest at a house at Barclay Square for the whole of that evening.'

'Are you sure that's true?' asked Holmes.

'Yes,' replied Mycroft. 'His brother, Colonel Valentine Walter, witnessed him leave Woolwich, and Admiral Sinclair saw him arrive in London.'

'Who is the other man with a key?'

'The senior technical engineer, Mr Sidney Johnson. He's a man of forty, married, with five children. He's a silent, unsmiling man. However, he has, generally speaking, an excellent record in public service. He's unpopular with his colleagues, but he is a hard worker. According to him, he was at home the whole of Monday evening – although we only have his wife's word for that. And he says his key never left his pocket.'

‘Tell us about Cadogan West,’ said Holmes.

‘He’d worked for the government for ten years,’ replied Mycroft. ‘He was a good worker. People sometimes felt he was impatient and rather superior, but a straight, honest man. He sat next to Sidney Johnson in the office. His duties meant that he personally worked with the plans every day. No one else touched them.’

‘Who locked up the plans that night?’ asked Holmes.

‘Mr Sidney Johnson,’ answered Mycroft.

‘Well, it is surely perfectly clear who took them away. They were actually found on Cadogan West. That seems final, does it not?’

‘It does, Sherlock,’ replied Mycroft. ‘And yet it leaves so much unexplained. In the first place, why did he take them?’

‘Can you suggest any possible reason for taking the papers to London except to sell them to a foreign agent?’ asked Holmes.

‘No, I cannot.’

‘Then, for the moment,’ began Holmes, ‘let us believe that this is what happened. Young West took the papers. Now he could only do this by having a copy of the key ...’

‘Copies of several keys,’ interrupted Mycroft. ‘He had to open the building and the room too.’

‘He had, then, copies of several keys,’ continued Holmes. ‘He took the papers to London to sell the ideas in them. No doubt he intended to put them back in the safe the next morning before they were missed. However, while in London on this dishonourable business he met his end.’

‘We can’t invent a better explanation with what we know at the moment,’ said Mycroft. ‘But, Sherlock, think how much you leave unexplained. Let us suppose that young Cadogan West actually had decided to take these papers to London. He

would then presumably have made an appointment with the foreign agent and kept his evening free. Instead, he bought two tickets for the theatre, got halfway there with his fiancée, and suddenly disappeared.'

Holmes watched his brother through half-closed eyes.

'That is the first objection to your explanation,' continued Mycroft. 'And objection No. 2: let's suppose that he reaches London and sees the foreign agent. He must replace the papers before morning or the loss will be discovered. He took away ten papers. Only seven were found in his pocket. What happened to the other three? He certainly wouldn't leave them anywhere. And, again, where is his payment for this dishonourable act? Surely we'd expect to find a large amount of money in his pocket.'

'It seems perfectly clear to me,' said Inspector Lestrade. 'He took the papers to sell them. He saw the foreign agent. They could not agree on the price. Cadogan West started home again, but the agent went with him. In the train the agent murdered him, took the more essential papers, and threw Cadogan West's body out of the train. That would explain everything, wouldn't it?'

'Why wasn't a ticket found on the body?' asked Mycroft.

'The ticket would have shown which station was nearest the agent's house,' answered Lestrade. 'Therefore he took it from the murdered man's pocket.'

'Good, Lestrade, very good,' said Holmes. 'Your idea is well thought out. But if this is true, then the case is at an end. The thief is dead and the plans of the Bruce-Partington submarine are presumably already out of the country. What is there for us to do?'

'We must act, Sherlock. We must act!' cried Mycroft, jumping to his feet. 'I strongly suspect this is not what



happened. Use your powers! Go to the scene of the crime! See the people involved! Stop at nothing! In all your career you have never had so great a chance to serve your country.'

'Well, well!' said Holmes, looking rather unconcerned. 'Come, Watson! And you, Lestrade. Would you care to join us? We'll begin our investigation at Aldgate Station. Good-bye, Mycroft. I will report to you by this evening. But I warn you in advance that you should not expect too much.'

An hour later Holmes, Lestrade and I stood in the Underground where the rails come out of the tunnel just before Aldgate Station. A polite red-faced old gentleman from the railway company was with us.





‘This is where the young man’s body was found,’ he said, pointing to a spot near the rails. ‘It couldn’t have fallen from above because there are no holes in the roof of the tunnel – as you can see. Therefore, it could only have come from a train. And, as far as we can work out, that train must have come through here at about midnight on Monday.’

‘Has the train been examined for any sign of violence?’ asked Holmes.

‘There were no signs of violence, and no ticket was found,’ replied the railwayman.

‘We did get some fresh information this morning,’ said Lestrade. ‘A passenger who went through Aldgate at about 11:40 on Monday night said that he heard a strange noise just before the train reached the station. He said it could have been a body hitting the railway line. There was thick fog, however, and he couldn’t see anything. He made no report of it at the time.’

Lestrade looked at Holmes.

‘Why, whatever is the matter, Holmes?’ he asked.

My friend was standing and staring at the rails, where they came round the corner out of the tunnel. There was an expression of deep thought on his face. Aldgate is a junction, where many lines meet. Holmes’s keen, questioning eyes were fixed on the points<sup>9</sup>. I saw on his face that tightening of the lips, that movement of the nostrils, and the concentration of the heavy eyebrows which I knew so well.

‘The points,’ he said quietly.

‘What about the points? What do you mean?’ asked Lestrade.

‘I don’t suppose there are many points on a line like this?’ asked Holmes.

‘Very few,’ replied the railwayman.

‘And a corner, too,’ said Holmes thoughtfully. ‘Points, and a corner. Perhaps I could be right!’

‘What is it, Mr Holmes?’ asked the railwayman. ‘Have you found a clue?’

‘An idea,’ replied Holmes. ‘Nothing more than that. But the case certainly grows in interest. It is most unusual. And yet why shouldn’t it be?’

He looked at the rails again.

‘Was there blood on the line?’ he asked.

‘Hardly any,’ replied the railwayman.

‘But I understand that there was considerable damage to the body.’

‘Bones were broken, but there was little damage to the outside of the body,’ replied the man.

‘And yet you would have expected some bleeding,’ said Holmes. ‘Would it be possible for me to examine the train?’

‘I’m afraid not, Mr Holmes,’ replied the man. ‘The carriages<sup>10</sup> have already been separated and used to make up new trains for the weekend.’

‘You can be certain, Mr Holmes,’ said Lestrade, ‘that every carriage was looked at very carefully. I organised it myself.’

‘As it happens, it was not the carriages that I wanted to examine,’ said Holmes, turning away impatiently. ‘Watson, we have done all we can here. We need not take up any more of your time, Mr Lestrade. I think our investigations must now take us to Woolwich.’

At London Bridge, Holmes called his brother, asking him to send to Baker Street a complete list of all foreign spies or international agents known to be in England.

His face still wore an expression of keenness and restless energy as we took our seats on the Woolwich train. Some new and important circumstance had obviously opened up a

creative line of thought. Think of a hunting dog with its ears and tail hanging down, as it lies around all day and sleeps – that was Holmes this morning. Now he was the same dog, powerful and with bright eyes, speeding after the smell of a fox or a rabbit.

‘There are clues here. There are possibilities,’ he said. ‘I should have seen them and understood them.’

‘Well, I’m still wandering around in the dark,’ I said.

‘The end of the road is dark to me too,’ he replied. ‘But I’ve got an idea which may take us a long way down it. The man was killed somewhere else, and his body was on the *roof* of the train.’

‘On the roof!’

‘Remarkable, isn’t it?’ said Holmes. ‘But consider the facts. Was it by chance that the body was found at exactly the spot where the train rolls from side to side as it comes round on the points? Isn’t that the place where something on the roof might fall off? The points would not affect anything inside the train. So, either the body fell off the roof, or something very curious has happened. And then consider the question of the blood. Of course, there would have been no bleeding on the line if the body had already bled somewhere else. Each fact is interesting in itself. But put them together ...’

‘And the ticket, too!’ I cried.

‘Exactly,’ agreed Holmes. ‘It explains the absence of a ticket. Everything fits together.’

‘But if this is what happened,’ I said, ‘we’re still as far as ever from solving the mystery of his death. In fact, it becomes stranger rather than simpler.’

‘Perhaps,’ said Holmes thoughtfully. He looked out of the window in silence until the train arrived at last at Woolwich Station. There he called a taxi and took Mycroft’s list of addresses from his pocket.

‘We have a number of calls to make in Woolwich this afternoon,’ he said. ‘I think that Sir James Walter should be the first.’

The famous Sir James lived in a fine house with lovely gardens stretching down to the Thames. As we reached it, the fog was lifting, and a thin, watery sunshine was breaking through. A servant<sup>11</sup> answered the door.

When we asked to see Sir James, the servant replied, with an unhappy look on his face, ‘I’m afraid Sir James died this morning.’

‘Good God!’ cried Holmes in amazement. ‘How did he die?’

‘Perhaps you would care to come in, sir, and see his brother, Colonel Valentine?’ suggested the servant.

‘An excellent idea,’ replied Holmes.

The servant showed us into a rather dark sitting room. A moment later we were joined by a tall, handsome, light-bearded man of about fifty – the younger brother of the dead man. His wild eyes, tearful cheeks, and untidy hair were all signs of the sudden disaster which had hit this household. He found it very difficult to speak.

‘It was this horrible affair of the missing papers,’ he said. ‘My brother, Sir James, was a man of great honour. He couldn’t go on after something like this. It broke his heart. He was always so proud of his department. It was a terrible shock.’

‘We were hoping that he might have given us some ideas which would have helped us to clear the matter up,’ explained Holmes.

‘It was all a mystery to him,’ replied Colonel Valentine, ‘just as it is to all of us. He had already told the police everything he knew. Naturally he had no doubt that Cadogan West was guilty.’

‘You have no new information about the affair?’ asked Holmes.

‘I don’t know anything myself except what I have read or heard. I don’t wish to be impolite, Mr Holmes, but you will understand that we are very upset at present. I must ask you to leave.’



‘This is indeed an unexpected development,’ said my friend when we had got back in the taxi. ‘I wonder if the death was natural, or whether the poor man killed himself! If he killed himself, maybe he was punishing himself because his department lost the papers. We must leave that question for another day. Now let’s visit the Cadogan Wests.’

Cadogan West’s mother lived in a small but well-kept house on the edge of Woolwich. The old lady was too affected by her son’s death to be of any help. However, at her side was a white-faced young lady, who introduced herself as Miss Violet Westbury, the fiancée of the dead man. She had been the last person to see him on that terrible night.

‘I can’t explain it, Mr Holmes,’ she said. ‘I haven’t slept since that night. I’ve been thinking night and day about what really happened. Arthur was the most determined, polite man on earth. He loved his country dearly. An accusation that he stole anything is ridiculous, impossible, unbelievable. Anyone who knew him would say that.’

‘But the facts, Miss Westbury?’ said Holmes.

‘Yes, yes,’ agreed Miss Westbury. ‘I admit I can’t explain them.’

‘Was he in need of money?’ asked Holmes.

‘No,’ replied Miss Westbury. ‘His needs were very simple and his salary sufficient. He’d saved a few hundred pounds, and we were going to get married in the New Year.’

‘He showed no signs of stress?’ asked Holmes. Then he added, ‘Miss Westbury, you must be absolutely honest with us.’

The quick eye of my companion had noticed some change in her manner. She coloured and did not speak for a moment.

‘Yes,’ she said at last, ‘I had a feeling that there was something on his mind.’

‘For long?’

‘Only for the last week or so. He was thoughtful and worried. Once I tried to persuade him to tell me about it. He admitted that there was something, and that it was to do with his work. “It’s too serious for me to speak about, even to you,” he said. He wouldn’t say anything else.’



‘Now tell us about that last evening,’ said Holmes.

‘We were going to the theatre,’ she replied. ‘The fog was incredibly thick. We were walking, and our route took us close to the office. Suddenly he rushed off into the fog.’

‘Without a word?’ asked Holmes.

‘A small shout,’ she replied. ‘That was all. I waited, but he never returned. Then I walked home. Next morning, after the office at Woolwich Arsenal opened, some of his colleagues came to ask where he was. At about twelve o’clock we heard the terrible news. Oh, Mr Holmes, if you could only, only save his honour! It was so much to him.’

Holmes gave the poor lady a sad look.

‘Come, Watson,’ he said. ‘We must move on. Our next stop will be the office where the papers were taken from.’

We said our goodbyes and returned to our taxi.

‘The case against this young man was black enough before, but our inquiries are making it blacker,’ he commented as the taxi set off. ‘His intended marriage gives him a motive for the crime. He naturally wanted money. The idea was in his head, since he spoke about it. And he nearly involved the girl in the crime by telling her his plans. It’s all very bad.’

‘But surely, Holmes, his good character must count for something?’ I argued. ‘And why would he leave the girl in the street and rush off to commit a crime?’

‘Exactly!’ said Holmes. ‘There are certainly objections. Nevertheless it’s a powerful case.’

Mr Sidney Johnson, the senior technical engineer, met us at the Woolwich office. He was a thin, middle-aged man with glasses. He rubbed his hands together nervously.

‘This is bad, Mr Holmes, very bad!’ he said. ‘Have you heard about Sir James’s death?’

‘We’ve just come from his house,’ replied Holmes.



‘Good God!’ he said. ‘It’s awful to think that West, of all people, should have stolen the plans!’

‘You’re sure he’s guilty, then?’ asked Holmes.

‘I can see no other explanation,’ replied Johnson. ‘And yet I would have trusted him as I trust myself.’

‘What time was the office closed on Monday?’ asked Holmes.

‘Five o’clock,’ answered Johnson.

‘Did you close it?’ asked Holmes.

‘I’m always the last man to leave,’ replied Johnson.

‘Where were the plans?’ asked Holmes.

‘In the safe. I put them there myself,’ said Johnson.

‘If Cadogan West wanted to get into the building after hours,’ said Holmes, ‘he would need three keys, wouldn’t he, before he could reach the papers?’

‘Yes, he would,’ replied Johnson. ‘The key to the outside door, the key to the office, and the key to the safe.’

‘And only Sir James Walter and you had those keys?’ asked Holmes.

‘I have no keys to the doors,’ replied Johnson, ‘only to the safe.’

‘Was Sir James a tidy, organised man?’ asked Holmes.

‘Yes, I think he was,’ replied Johnson. ‘I know that he always kept those three keys on the same ring. I have often seen them there.’

‘And that ring went with him to London?’ said Holmes.

‘That’s what he said.’

‘And your key never left your pocket?’

‘Never.’

‘Then if West is guilty, he must have had copies of the keys,’ said Holmes. ‘And yet there were no keys found on his body.’

Holmes thought for a moment.

‘One other point,’ he said. ‘If someone in this office wanted to sell the plans, wouldn’t it be simpler to copy them rather than to take the originals?’

‘You’d need considerable technical knowledge to copy the plans properly,’ replied Johnson.

‘But would I be right in thinking that Sir James, and you, and Cadogan West all had that technical knowledge?’ said Holmes.



‘No doubt we had,’ replied Johnson. ‘But what’s the point of thinking like that when the original plans were actually found on West?’

‘Well, it’s certainly strange that he should risk taking the originals,’ began Holmes, ‘especially if he could safely have made copies, which would have been just as valuable.’

‘No doubt it is strange,’ replied Johnson. ‘And yet that’s what he did.’

‘Every inquiry in this case uncovers something that cannot be explained,’ commented Holmes, before changing the subject. ‘Now there are three papers still missing. They are, as I understand, the essential ones.’

‘That’s right.’

‘Do you mean that anyone holding those three papers, but without the seven others, could build a Bruce-Partington submarine?’ asked Holmes.

‘That’s what I originally thought,’ replied Johnson. ‘However, today I have looked at the seven papers that were returned, and now I’m not so sure. One of the new inventions used in the submarine is on one of those seven papers. Until someone could create that piece of equipment for themselves they wouldn’t be able to make the boat. Of course they might soon solve that problem.’

‘But the three missing drawings are the most important?’ asked Holmes.

‘Without doubt,’ said Johnson.

‘I think, with your permission,’ said Holmes, ‘I’ll now have a look round this office.’

Holmes examined the lock on the safe, the door of the room, and finally the shutters that closed in front of each window. It was only when we were in the garden outside that he became excited. There was a bush outside the window, and

several of the branches had been broken. He examined these carefully, and then studied some marks on the earth beneath. Finally he asked Mr Johnson to close the shutters. He showed me that they hardly met in the middle, and that it would be possible for anyone outside to see what was going on inside the room.



‘Well, Watson,’ he then said, ‘I do not think that Woolwich can help us further. Let’s see if we can do better in London.’

We did, however, gather one more piece of information at Woolwich Station. The man in the ticket office knew Cadogan West well by sight. He told us that he had seen Cadogan West on the Monday night, and that he had gone to London on the 8:15 train to London Bridge. He was alone and took a single ticket. The man noticed at the time that Cadogan West seemed nervous and excited. A look at the timetable showed us that the 8:15 was the first train he could have taken after leaving Miss Westbury at about 7:30.

‘Let’s try and work out what happened, Watson,’ said Holmes after half an hour of silence. ‘In all our joint adventures I do not think that we have ever had a case which was more difficult to understand. Every time we make a fresh advance, there just seems to be another hill to climb. However, I am certain we have made some important progress.’

Holmes looked thoughtful and then spoke again: ‘Our inquiries at Woolwich have mainly led us to believe in the guilt of young Cadogan West. However, the clues at the office window would lend themselves to a more optimistic explanation. Let us suppose, for example, that West was approached by some foreign agent. He might have had to promise to keep such a discussion secret. However, it would almost certainly have affected him in the way that his fiancée told us, making him thoughtful and worried. Let’s also suppose that as Cadogan West was on his way to the theatre with the young lady, he suddenly, in the fog, caught sight of this same foreign agent going in the direction of the Woolwich office. The only thing he could think of was that he had to do his duty. He followed the man. He looked through the office window. He witnessed the documents being stolen. In this way

we avoid the argument that no one would take the originals when they could make copies. This foreign agent had to take originals. So far the story makes sense.'

'What is the next step?' I asked.

'Then we come into difficulties. One would imagine that in such circumstances the first act of young Cadogan West would be to grab the thief and raise the alarm. Why didn't he? Could it instead have been a colleague, one of his superiors, who took the papers? That would explain West's behaviour. Or could the thief have escaped in the fog? West therefore set off at once to London to catch him at his house – if, indeed, he knew where the thief lived. He must have felt that the situation was extremely urgent, since he left his girlfriend standing in the fog and made no effort to communicate with her. Our story stops there. And it's a long way to get from there to someone putting West's body, with seven papers in his pocket, on the roof of an Underground train. My feeling now is that we should work from the other end of the time line. If Mycroft has sent us the list of foreign agents I asked for earlier, we may be able to choose the right man and follow two lines of inquiry instead of one.'

Sure enough, there was a note waiting for us at Baker Street. Holmes looked at it quickly and threw it over to me.

*There are only two men who would get involved with an affair as big as this. They are: Louis La Rothiere, of Campden Mansions, Notting Hill; and Hugo Oberstein, 13 Caulfield Gardens, Kensington. We know Oberstein was in town on Monday, but he is now reported to have left. Glad to hear you have seen some light. The Prime Minister is waiting anxiously for your final report. The whole force of the government is ready to help if you should need it. Mycroft.*

Excitedly Holmes spread out his big map of London. ‘Well, well,’ he said presently, making a satisfied noise, ‘I do honestly believe that we are going to succeed after all.’ He banged his hand against my shoulder with sudden good humour. ‘I’m going out now. Just to have a look around. I won’t attempt anything serious without my trusty friend and biographer. I will be back in an hour or two.’

Some of Holmes’s happiness passed itself on to me. He never gave up his usual seriousness of manner without good cause. I waited impatiently for his return all through that long November evening. At last, soon after nine o’clock, he rang telling me to meet him at Goldini’s Restaurant in Kensington. I was to take some tools, a torch and my gun.

This was not sensible equipment for a respectable person to carry through the dark, foggy streets. I hid it all carefully in my overcoat and went straight to the address he had given me. I found my friend sitting at a little round table near the door of a bright Italian restaurant.

‘Have you brought the tools?’ he asked.

‘They’re here, in my overcoat,’ I replied.

‘Excellent,’ he said. ‘Now it must be obvious to you, Watson, that the young man’s body was *placed* on the roof of the train.’

‘Couldn’t he have been dropped from a bridge?’ I asked.

‘I’d say it was impossible,’ answered Holmes. ‘If you examine the roofs of underground trains, you’ll find that they are round, and there’s no rail along the sides to stop a body falling off. Therefore, we can say for certain that young Cadogan West was placed on the roof of the train.’

‘How could he be placed there?’ I asked.

‘There’s only one possible way. You know that the Underground runs clear of tunnels at some places in the city. When I’ve travelled on it, I’ve occasionally seen windows just

above my head. Now, let's suppose that a train stopped under one of these windows. Would there be any difficulty in placing a body on the roof?

'It seems most unlikely,' I replied.

'We must fall back on the old saying,' said Holmes. 'When all other explanations fail, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. In this case all other explanations *have* failed. When I found that the leading foreign agent, who had just left London, lived in a row of houses right next to the Underground, I was delighted.'

'Indeed.'

'Yes,' said Holmes. 'Mr Hugo Oberstein, of 13 Caulfield Gardens, became the focus of my attention. I began my investigations at Gloucester Road Station, where a very helpful man from the railway company took me along the line. We discovered that a window on the back stairs at Caulfield Gardens opens over the line. He also let me check an even more essential fact: Underground trains frequently stop for some minutes at that very spot because there is a junction with other railways.'

'Fantastic, Holmes! You've done it!' I said.

'So far, Watson. So far. We're advancing, but the goal is still some way away,' said Holmes. 'Having seen the back of Caulfield Gardens, I visited the front and satisfied myself that Oberstein was not there. We must remember that Oberstein has gone abroad to get rid of the plans. However, he's not 'on the run' because at the moment he has no reason to fear the police. I'm sure the idea of a couple of ordinary people paying his house a visit would never have occurred to him. So that is exactly what we are about to do.'

'Couldn't we speak to the police about what we have discovered and let them take over now?' I asked.



‘There’s not enough evidence.’

‘What else can we hope to find?’

‘We cannot tell what may be there.’

‘I don’t like it, Holmes.’

‘My dear old friend,’ said Holmes, ‘you can keep watch in the street. I’ll do the criminal part. This is not a time to worry about details. We have to go.’

My answer was to stand up.

‘You are right, Holmes,’ I said. ‘We have to go.’

He jumped up and shook me by the hand.

‘I knew you’d come,’ he said, and for a moment I saw something in his eyes – something nearer to fondness than I had ever seen before.

13 Caulfield Gardens was a large house in west London. Holmes shone his torch at the huge front door.

‘This is a serious piece of work,’ he said. ‘It certainly has more than one lock. We’ll do better at the back door.’ A minute later we were there, and Holmes set to work. I saw him lean into it and push hard. Then with a sharp crash it flew open. We found ourselves in a dark corridor and closed the door behind us. Holmes led the way up an uncarpeted stair. Then the dull yellow light from his torch picked out a low window.

‘Here we are, Watson,’ he said. ‘This must be the window.’ He threw it open, and as he did so there was a low sound, growing steadily louder and louder until a train rushed deafeningly past us in the darkness. Holmes flashed his light along the bottom of the window. There was a thick coat of coal dust over it from the passing trains, but the black surface was marked and rubbed in places.

‘You can see where they rested the body,’ said Holmes. ‘Oh! Watson! Look at this! There can be no doubt that it is a blood mark.’



He was pointing to some faint coloured marks along the edge of the window. 'Here is another on the stone of the stair. The demonstration is complete. Let us stay here until a train stops.'

We didn't have long to wait. The very next train raced out of the tunnel as before, but slowed in the open. Then, with an ugly noise from brakes, it stopped immediately beneath us. It was a very short distance from the window to the roof of the train. Holmes softly closed the window.

'Our thinking has been correct so far,' he said. 'What do you reckon, Watson?'

'Amazing,' I said.

'There are still difficulties ahead,' said Holmes. 'But perhaps we may find something here to help us.'

We went up the back stairs and entered a group of rooms on the first floor. One was a dining room, containing nothing of interest. The second was a bedroom, also of no interest. The remaining room appeared more promising, and my friend started a careful search of it. But at the end of an hour he was no further forward.

'The clever old dog has cleaned up after himself,' he said. 'Any dangerous papers have been destroyed or removed. This box is our last chance.'

It was a small metal box which stood on the writing-desk. Holmes forced it open with one of our tools. There were several rolls of paper inside, covered with figures and calculations. Words occurred from time to time, which could have suggested some possible connection to a submarine. Holmes threw all the papers impatiently to one side. There only remained an envelope with some small newspaper cuttings inside. He shook them out on the table, and at once I saw from the look on his face that his hopes had been raised.

‘What’s this, Watson? What’s this?’ he cried. ‘Some messages in the advertisement pages of a newspaper. From the letters and the paper, it looks like the *Daily Telegraph*. No dates, but we can work out the order. This must be the first: *Hoped to hear sooner. Price agreed. Write fully to address given. Pierrot.*

‘The next reads: *Too complicated to describe. Must have full report. Your stuff is ready when everything delivered. Pierrot.*

‘Then comes: *Matter urgent. Agreement ends unless delivery completed. Make appointment by letter. Check for my advertisement. Pierrot.*

‘Finally: *Monday night after nine. Two taps. Only ourselves. Do not be so suspicious. Payment in cash when everything delivered. Pierrot.*’



‘A fairly complete record, Watson! If only we could catch the man at the other end!’ He sat lost in thought, tapping his fingers on the table. Finally he jumped to his feet.

‘Well, perhaps it won’t be so difficult, after all,’ he said. ‘There’s nothing more we can do here, Watson. I think we might drive round to the offices of the *Daily Telegraph*, and so bring an end to a good day’s work.’

\* \* \*

Mycroft Holmes and Inspector Lestrade came round by appointment after breakfast the next day and Sherlock Holmes related what he and I had done the day before. The policeman shook his head over our confession of breaking into Oberstein’s house.

‘It’s no surprise then that you get better results than we do,’ he said. ‘But one of these days you and your friend will find yourselves in trouble.’

‘Ah! But we did it for England, and for home and for beauty, didn’t we Watson?’ grinned Holmes. ‘We risked our freedom for our country. And what do you think of it, Mycroft?’

‘Well done, Sherlock!’ said Mycroft. ‘Excellent! Truly excellent! But how can you make use of it?’

Holmes picked the *Daily Telegraph* up off the table.

‘Have you seen Pierrot’s advertisement today?’ he asked.

‘What? Another one?’ said Mycroft.

‘Yes, here it is,’ said Holmes and read out:

*Tonight. Same hour. Same place. Two taps. Most important. Your safety at risk. Pierrot.*

‘Good God!’ cried Lestrade. ‘If he answers that, we’ve got him!’

‘That was my idea when I put it in the newspaper,’ explained Holmes. ‘If you could both come with us at about eight o’clock to Caulfield Gardens, we might possibly get a little nearer to a solution.’

One of the most remarkable features of Sherlock Holmes’s character was his ability to switch all his thoughts onto lighter things once he had persuaded himself that there was no further work to be done. I remember that for the whole of that unforgettable day he lost himself in a study of Orlande Lassus, a musician from the Middle Ages. Of course, I have none of this ability to ‘switch off’. For me, therefore, the day seemed never ending. I only began to relax a little when at last we set out from Baker Street.

Lestrade and Mycroft met us outside Gloucester Road Station. We had left the back door of Oberstein’s house open the night before. By nine o’clock we were all sitting in the study, waiting patiently.

An hour passed and then another two. Lestrade and Mycroft moved nervously in their seats and kept looking at their watches. But Holmes sat silent and calm. His eyes were half shut, though every sense was very much awake. Suddenly he raised his head.

‘He’s coming,’ he said.

There had been an almost silent step outside the door. Then another. Then two sharp taps on the door. Holmes rose, signalling us to remain sitting. There was hardly any light in the corridor. Holmes opened the front door. A dark figure moved quickly past him and Holmes closed and locked the door. ‘This way!’ we heard him say, and a moment later our man stood before us. Holmes had followed him closely. As the man turned with a cry of surprise and alarm, Holmes caught him by the collar and threw him back into the room. Before

our prisoner had recovered his balance, the door was shut and Holmes stood with his back against it. The man looked angrily round. Then his eyes rolled up, and he fell unconscious to the floor. As he did so, his large hat flew off, the scarf fell from across his face, and there were the long light beard and the soft, handsome features of Colonel Valentine Walter.

Holmes gave a whistle of surprise.

‘You can write me down as a fool this time, Watson,’ he said. ‘This was not the bird that I was looking for.’



‘Who is he?’ asked Mycroft excitedly.

‘The younger brother of the late Sir James Walter, the head of the Submarine Department,’ said Holmes.

Holmes put a finger to his lips.

‘Ah!’ he said. ‘I see what’s been happening here. I think that you had better let me question him.’

Our prisoner began to recover consciousness. He sat up and looked round, an expression of horror on his face.

‘What’s this?’ he asked. ‘I came here to visit Mr Oberstein.’

‘We know everything, Colonel Walter,’ said Holmes. ‘We know everything about your relationship with Oberstein. We also know about the circumstances surrounding the death of young Cadogan West. An apology and a confession might make things a little easier for you, since there are still some details which only you can tell us about.’

The man groaned and put his face in his hands. We waited, but he was silent.

‘Let me make it clear,’ said Holmes, ‘we know all the essential facts. We know you needed money. We know you made copies of your brother’s keys. We know you started to deal with Oberstein, who answered your letters through advertisements in the *Daily Telegraph*. We know that you went to the Woolwich office on Monday night, but that you were seen and followed by young Cadogan West. It’s likely that he had some previous reason to suspect you. He saw you steal the papers. However, he couldn’t raise the alarm because it was just possible that you were taking the papers to your brother in London. Putting everything else to one side, like the faithful employee that he was, he followed you closely in the fog until you reached this house. Here he got involved. And it was here, Colonel Walter, that you added the terrible crime of murder to what you had already done.’



‘I did not!’ cried our sorry prisoner. ‘I swear I did not!’

‘Tell us, then,’ said Holmes, ‘what happened to Cadogan West before you put his body on the roof of the train.’

‘I will. I swear to you,’ answered the prisoner. ‘I did the rest. I admit it. It was just as you say. I owed a large amount of money and Oberstein offered me five thousand pounds. But as for murder, I am innocent.’

‘What happened, then?’ asked Holmes.

‘Cadogan West had had his suspicions before,’ began Colonel Walter, ‘and he followed me just as you described. I didn’t realise it until I reached the front door. I’d given two taps and Oberstein had come to the door. The young man rushed up and demanded to know what we were about to do with the papers. Oberstein had a small metal cosh<sup>12</sup>. He always carried it with him. As West forced his way into the house, Oberstein hit him on the head and killed him. We had no idea what to do. Then Oberstein remembered that trains sometimes stopped under his back window. First he examined the papers I’d brought. He said that three of them were so technical that he must keep them. I didn’t want him to, but he persuaded me that if we put the others into Cadogan West’s pocket the young man would be blamed for the whole business. We waited for a train to stop at the window. Then we let West’s body down onto the roof of the train.’

‘And your brother?’ asked Holmes.

‘He said nothing,’ replied Colonel Walter. ‘But he’d caught me once before with his keys. I saw in his eyes that he suspected. As you know, it was the end for him.’

There was silence in the room. It was broken by Mycroft.

‘Can you not make up for the damage you have done?’ he suggested. ‘It would make you feel better, and it might lessen your punishment.’

‘How could I do that?’ asked Colonel Walter.  
‘Didn’t Oberstein leave you an address?’ asked Mycroft.  
‘He said that letters to the Hotel du Louvre, Paris, would eventually reach him,’ replied Colonel Walter.  
‘Then you are still able to help us,’ said Sherlock Holmes.  
‘I’ll do anything,’ said Walter. ‘This man has ruined me.’  
‘Here’s some paper and a pen,’ said Holmes. ‘Sit at this desk and write down what I tell you:

*Dear Sir, About the papers I gave you, you will no doubt have realised by now that one essential detail is missing. I have a copy of that detail which will make your information complete. I do not trust the post enough to send this to you. I would come to you abroad, but I am unable to leave the country at present. Therefore I shall expect to meet you in the lounge of the Charing Cross Hotel at noon on Saturday.*



‘That will do very well. I shall be very surprised if it does not catch our man.’

And it did! It’s a matter of history – that secret history of a nation which is often so much more interesting than what is known publicly – that Oberstein could not turn down this golden opportunity. He came to collect the missing detail and was safely put away in a British prison for fifteen years. In his suitcase were the priceless Bruce-Partington plans, which he had been trying to sell to all the governments of Europe.

Colonel Walter died in prison towards the end of the second year of his sentence. As for Holmes, he returned enthusiastically to his study of Lassus and the music of the Middle Ages.

## ACTIVITIES

- 1 Check your answers to *Before you read* on page 4.
- 2 Complete the summary of the story with the names in the box.

Sherlock Holmes	Mycroft (x2)	Cadogan West
Inspector Lestrade (x3)	Sir James Walter	
Colonel Valentine Walter (x2)	Violet Westbury	
Sidney Johnson	Watson (x4)	Hugo Oberstein (x3)

<sup>1</sup> ..... receives a telegram from his brother, <sup>2</sup> ..... , about the death of a man called <sup>3</sup> ..... and some missing papers. Mycroft and <sup>4</sup> ..... visit Holmes and <sup>5</sup> ..... in Baker Street to explain the case. Holmes, Watson and <sup>6</sup> ..... go to Aldgate station, where Cadogan West's body was found. Then Holmes and <sup>7</sup> ..... go to the house of <sup>8</sup> ..... , but discover that he has died that morning. They speak to his brother, <sup>9</sup> ..... . After that, Holmes and Watson visit Cadogan West's mother and his fiancée, <sup>10</sup> ..... . Finally, Holmes and Watson visit <sup>11</sup> ..... at his office in the Woolwich Arsenal. Holmes then continues his investigations alone. He later calls <sup>12</sup> ..... and arranges to meet him at a restaurant in Kensington. That evening, Holmes and Watson break into the house of <sup>13</sup> ..... , where they find a window overlooking the Underground line. Holmes puts a message in the newspaper, hoping Cadogan West's killer will see it. Holmes waits in <sup>14</sup> ..... 's house with <sup>15</sup> ..... , <sup>16</sup> ..... and <sup>17</sup> ..... for the thief and killer to arrive. After a while <sup>18</sup> ..... arrives. He has stolen the papers, but <sup>19</sup> ..... killed Cadogan West.

**3** Put the events in order.

- 1 Oberstein takes three of the papers and puts the rest in Cadogan West's pocket. ☐
- 2 Cadogan West follows Colonel Walter to Oberstein's house. ☐
- 3 Cadogan West sees Colonel Walter near the Woolwich office and follows him. ☐
- 4 Cadogan West's body is found at Aldgate station. ☐
- 5 Cadogan West sees Colonel Walter take the submarine papers. ☐
- 6 Oberstein and Colonel Walter put Cadogan West's body onto the roof of a train. ☐
- 7 Oberstein hits Cadogan West on the head and kills him. ☐

**4** How does Sherlock Holmes solve the case? Read the sentences and write T (true) or F (false) in the boxes.

- 1 Cadogan West did not have a train ticket. ☐
- 2 Cadogan West's body was thrown out of the window of a train. ☐
- 3 Sidney Johnson probably stole the plans to sell them. ☐
- 4 Cadogan West and Violet Westbury argued about something. ☐
- 5 Someone has broken the shutter of the window of the Woolwich Arsenal office. ☐
- 6 Some of the houses near the Underground line have windows above the train line. ☐
- 7 Cadogan West's body has been thrown out of the window of Oberstein's house. ☐
- 8 Oberstein is leaving secret messages in the newspaper, using the name 'Pierrot'. ☐

## People in the story

**Sherlock Holmes:** the famous detective

**Dr Watson:** Sherlock Holmes's friend and assistant

**Violet Hunter:** a governess<sup>13</sup>

**Miss Stoper:** runs an employment agency

**Jephro Rucastle:** lives in the countryside near Winchester

**Alice Rucastle:** Jephro Rucastle's daughter by his first wife

**Mrs Rucastle:** Jephro Rucastle's second wife

**Toller:** Jephro Rucastle's servant

**Mrs Toller:** Toller's wife, also Jephro Rucastle's servant

**Edward Rucastle:** Jephro Rucastle's young son by his second wife

**Mr Fowler:** a friend of Alice Rucastle

## BEFORE YOU READ



- ❶ What do you think the title refers to?

.....

- ❷ Look at the pictures on pages 47–73 and *People in the story* above. Who do you think the people are?

.....