

UNKNOWN SHERLOCK HOLMES MANUSCRIPT DISCOVERED

If there's one thing I don't like at all about taking breakfast with Holmes it is that, between the kipper and the scrambled eggs, he takes up his violin and starts playing something. To my ears, at that time of the morning, a violin - no matter who is playing it - sounds like a cat screeching. Quite frequently I have to invent an excuse to avoid taking breakfast with him.

On this particular morning, we had consumed some kippers, excellently cooked by Mrs. Hudson, when Holmes stood up to reach for his violin. At that very moment we heard a loud crashing noise on Baker Street, right outside Holmes' window. We leapt to the window and looked down. A sleek gleaming motor-car had collided with a rag and bone man's cart. The motor-car's uniformed chauffeur was offering a fistful of new bank notes to the filthily-dressed rag and bone man. A most elegant young woman, clearly the owner of the motor-car, was gliding across the road towards Holmes' front door. We repaired hastily to our respective arm-chairs and took up the morning newspapers. It was not long before Mrs. Hudson announced our visitor. "A Miss Elisabetta Delapole to see you, Mr. Holmes," said Mrs. Hudson. "Show her in," said Holmes.

We jumped to our feet as the most beautiful creature I have ever seen glided into the room. She was tall, willowy, with a perfect complexion, gray expressive eyes and a mountain of gold hair piled high on her head. Although far from knowledgeable in such matters, I believed she was dressed in the latest Paris fashion. I looked at Holmes. He appeared shaken, his eyes fixed, his hands trembling.

"Please sit down, Miss Delapole," I said.

Holmes shook his head and muttered 'Good morning.'

I waited for Holmes to speak but he did not. He was pale.

"Please tell Mr. Holmes the purpose of your visit," I said to this dazzling creature.

"I 'ave come for your 'elp," she replied.

I assumed from her accent that she was French. I stole a look at Holmes. He seemed dumb-struck. And then he shook himself and spoke.

"Mademoiselle comes from the southern part of France, possibly Tarn et Garonne, is from a wealthy aristocratic family, is contemplating marriage but is unsure of her suitor who is a man of mystery."

"Ow can you know this?" exclaimed the vision.

"So I must help you," he said. "It will be my sincere pleasure, mademoiselle. You can rely on my best endeavours. I assure you."

He wiped his brow with his handkerchief. I coughed.

"Oh. Ah, yes. Allow me to present my esteemed colleague, Dr. Watson."

"Ow do you do?" she said, fluttering her eye-lashes.

The effect of this on Holmes was astonishing. His normally pale features flushed and I am almost sure his ears twitched.

"What is the name of your suitor?" asked Holmes, pulling himself together.

“Sebastien de Moriarty,” she replied.

“Moriarty!” exclaimed both Holmes and myself, astonished.

“You know of 'im?” asked the vision.

“Indeed we do,” replied Holmes. “Please excuse us for two minutes, Mademoiselle.”

Holmes indicated to me to follow him to the ante-room. There he turned to me, with a most serious expression on his face.

“Watson. We must do everything in our power to save this young woman from that dreadful villain.”

“Of course,” I replied. “You may rely upon my complete assistance. We must save her from such a terrible marriage.”

“Indeed we must,” said Holmes. “I want her for myself!”