

## **Sherlock Holmes Last Case**

“Observe, Watson, how the wretched man holds himself” Sherlock Holmes distinctive timbre echoed round the bare walls of the room. “... the posture, as I have witnessed often enough in the past, of a well seasoned criminal – and one, moreover, that finds no peace within himself”.

I murmured assent, admonishing him gently for raising his voice, as several concerned eyes were casting themselves in our direction.

Unabashed the detective continued in the same vein, his aquiline features focussed intently on the wizened caricature slumped in the chair opposite him. “See how he holds his hand, the thumb, bruised at the joint – evidence, no doubt, of some foul purpose”.

The object in question scarcely heeded his examiner, his grey eyes merely flickering momentarily in the direction of the Maestro, before dropping, once more, to gaze, unseeingly at the threadbare carpet in front of him.

“Calm yourself, Holmes”, I reprimanded a bit more urgently, “the doctor said that you mustn’t exert yourself”. Holmes pulled himself together with an effort and turned his attention back to myself.

“You have it then? You were able to get hold of it?”

“Yes, but” Yes, I had it, but it had been a bit of a struggle to find it, and I was not sure that I could acquire any more in these benighted times.

“Well, don’t delay, then, give it to me at once!” His present state had not diminished his imperious manner – one that I had grown well accustomed to over the many years that we had worked together.

“Hush, not so loud” I requested urgently. “The staff will not approve of you having it – and – “

“May God strike them dead, the surly crew, and the foul medicines that they issue so liberally to keep us quiet!”

“ – and”, I continued “this is the last case I could find at Baker Street”

“The Last Case?” Holmes gasped. His swarthy pallour, diminished already by his confinement in the Sanatorium, diminished further. “How then”, he whispered, “Shall I sustain myself in this Hell Hole?”

“Mr Holmes – I must ask you not to disturb the other guests so – or I shall have to ask you to return to your room”. A large Afro-Caribbean nurse, her nut-brown face surmounting a crisply starched blue apron, descended rapidly in our direction.

“And please, for Heaven’s sake, will you leave Mr Moriarty alone”

“Moriarty!” Holmes started, appalled at his failure to recognise his old foe, although no fault could be

attributed to him because of the latter's evident physical degeneration. "I would not have guessed", he faltered.

Whether from the prospect of enduring long days and nights without his lifelong comfort and balm – or from meeting again, after many years, his old adversary, Holmes was stung into action.

He rose abruptly from his wheelchair, his loathing of his mortal enemy giving him renewed vigour, and tottered forwards on weakened legs, his arms outstretched in front of him, and moved towards his nemesis.

His battered and unplayable violin, with the 'G' string missing, tumbled to the floor from his lap, and the great man, stripped unkindly of his renowned athleticism, tripped over the neck of the old instrument and fell heavily to the floor.

The entire room, and the World's Greatest Detective, fell silent.