

1 } The story of "Silver Blaze" starts with Sherlock Holmes admitting he has made a mistake. The detective had been asked to investigate the disappearance of the champion racehorse, Silver Blaze, and the murder of its trainer, John Straker; telegrams had been received from both Colonel Ross, Silver Blaze's owner, and Inspector Gregory of Scotland Yard. Ross is more concerned with the disappearance of the horse, as it was the favourite for the prominent Wessex Cup and associated prize money, than with the murder of his trainer.

Holmes' mistake comes because he had not acted on the telegrams, believing that the famous horse would soon be recovered and its kidnapper identified as the murderer. Two days, though, had elapsed, and there had been no developments. So, Holmes and Watson made their way down to King's Pyland on Dartmoor. Holmes sets out the known facts. With so much money riding on Silver Blaze, extra precautions were being taken at Colonel Ross' stables. The trainer, John Straker, was a long-time associate of Ross, both as a jockey and trainer, and he and the three lads were trusted.

One of the nearest neighbours to King's Pyland was a rival stable of Lord Backwater, but pretty much all around was desolate moorland. On the night when the crime was committed, one of the lads, Ned Hunter, was on guard duty whilst the rest of the household was eating supper in the house. The maid, Edith Baxter, took food out to the land when she was met by a bookie trying to get information about Silver Blaze and the other stabled horses. Ned Hunter ran the bookie off, but the situation left John Straker uneasy. Later that night, John Straker would leave the house, against his wife's wishes, to check on Silver Blaze, and the trainer would not be seen alive again.

The next morning the body of John Straker was found about a ¼ mile from the stables, his head crushed by a heavy blow and a deep wound on his thigh. In his hand, Straker had a small knife, and he was grasping onto a red and black cravat. His, and the bookie was known to carry a weighted stick that could inflict the death blow on Straker. It would appear that Straker had discovered Simpson as he attempted to steal away the horse, with deadly consequences; the thigh wound to Straker was now believed to be self-inflicted, caused by a convulsion when the death blow was administered. Holmes suggests why Simpson might not be guilty, but there is nothing seemingly concrete to overcome the evidence being presented. Holmes starts to look at the physical evidence and discovers that the knife that Straker had held was a cataract knife. Strangely, amongst Straker's papers, Holmes also discovered a milliner's receipt addressed to William Derbyshire, a friend of Straker's. Holmes then examines the evidence on the ground where Straker was killed. Holmes seems confident that he has solved the case and can even recover the missing horse, and encourages Colonel Ross to keep the name of Silver Blaze on the running list for the Wessex Cup.

Holmes and Watson set off alone across the moor, Holmes deducing that the only place a racehorse could be is at a racing stable, and as he is not at King's Ryland, he must be at the rival stable. Holmes eventually uncovers tracks which back up this hypothesis. At the stable, they encounter the rival trainer, Silas Brown, and in a matter of minutes, Holmes manages to get the combative trainer to meekly comply with his wishes (although Holmes doesn't inform Watson of what his wishes are). It is, however, obvious that Silas Brown had Silver Blaze hidden within the stables, although Holmes is convinced that the trainer had nothing to do with its initial disappearance. Holmes and Watson return to King's Ryland, but Holmes doesn't tell Colonel Ross or Gregory of the developments and simply asks for a photo of John Straker. As Holmes leaves Dartmoor, he also discovers the seemingly random fact that some sheep have gone lame recently. Gregory is now taking more of an interest in what Holmes is doing, and Holmes offers him the guidance to look at the actions of the stable's dog, although Gregory is perplexed as the dog has done nothing. A few days later, the Wessex Cup is to be run, and Colonel Ross is anxious and angry as he is still horseless. Holmes still doesn't explain everything but instead points out that Ross's horse is in the running lineup, although Ross is convinced that the horse identified as Silver Blaze isn't his horse. Of course, Silver Blaze wins the race, and Holmes then shows how the markings of Silver Blaze

have been covered up. Ross is now apologetic and happy, and now Holmes can explain everything; it was Silver Blaze who killed John Straker. Despite being trusted, Straker had plotted against his employer, and had sought to make Silver Blaze lame by cutting him with the cataract knife, something he had practiced on sheep beforehand. As Straker had bent down to inflict the wound, the horse had kicked out, killing the trainer and leaving it loose on the moor. Straker had drugged his stable lad and then led out the horse to do the job; of course, the stable dog had not barked, as its owner was up and about that night.

Straker had been leading a double life in Derbyshire with a second wife and was in a great deal of debt because of this second wife's expensive tastes. Ross asks where the horse had been after it had bolted, but Holmes doesn't reveal the rival stable's involvement in the disappearance, and Colonel Ross doesn't push it.

All in all, another successful case for Sherlock Holmes.

2} "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" is a Sherlock Holmes short story by the British author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It first appeared in print in the December 1910 issue of the magazine *The Strand*. It would be republished in October 1917 as part of the anthology *His Last Bow*.

While on vacation in Cornwall, the brilliant consulting detective Sherlock Holmes is asked to investigate a very strange case. A woman named Brenda Tregennis has been found dead at a table in her house. Two of her brothers, George and Owen, are found seated next to her, still alive but completely insane. The dead woman and the mad men all have looks of terror on their faces. A few days later, a third brother, Mortimer Tregennis, is also found dead with the same look of horror on his face.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle included "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" in a list of his twelve favorite Sherlock Holmes short stories which was compiled for *The Strand* magazine in 1927.[1] The story has been adapted for film and television.

Holmes (Jeremy Brett) and Dr. Watson (Edward Hardwicke) find themselves in Cornwall one spring for the former's health, but the holiday ends with a bizarre event. Mr. Mortimer Tregennis (Damien Thomas), a local gentleman, and Mr. Roundhay (Michael Aitkens), the local vicar, come to Holmes to report that Tregennis's two brothers have gone insane, and his sister has died. Tregennis had gone to visit them in their village (Tredannick Wollas), dined whist with them, and then left. Tregennis did not stay with his siblings at the estate as there was some family dispute going on & instead stayed with the vicar at the vicarage.

When he came back in the morning, he found them still sitting in their places at the table, the brothers, George (Peter Shaw) and Owen (Norman Bowler), laughing and singing, and the sister, Brenda (Christine Collins), dead. The housekeeper had discovered them in this state, and fainted. The vicar has not been to see them yet. Tregennis says that he remembers one brother looking through the window during dinner before the tragedy, and then he himself turned to see some "movement" outside. He declares that the horrific event is the work of the devil. Mortimer Tregennis was once estranged from his siblings by the matter of dividing the proceeds from the sale of the family business, but he insists that all was forgiven, although he still lives apart from them in the same village. Tregennis tells Holmes that he kept his hopes alive of returning home some day. The doctor who was summoned, reckoned that she had been dead for six hours, which places the time of death to very nearly after Tregennis left the house. The doctor also collapsed into a chair for a while after arriving. Holmes goes to the house in question and, apparently carelessly, kicks over a watering pot, soaking everyone's feet. The housekeeper tells Holmes that she heard nothing in the night, and that the family had been particularly happy and prosperous lately. Holmes observes the

remains of a fire in the fireplace. Tregennis explains that it was a cold, damp night.

The case Afterwards, Holmes lays the case out to Watson thus: Quite obviously, there is no point in attributing the tragedy to the Devil; therefore, what took place can only be the work of a person. Whatever happened to those people happened right after Tregennis left, for they had not moved, and everything was in the same place. Mortimer Tregennis went swiftly back to the vicarage where he lives (a footprint sample was obtained in the watering pot "accident"). The only suggestion of an explanation - the "movement" - comes from Mortimer Tregennis; Given the weather, anyone appearing at the window and doing something horrifying enough to instantly kill someone would have had to come right up to the window thus trampling the flowerbed, which is still intact. Dr. Leon Sterndale (Denis Quilley), the famous hunter and explorer, aborts his sailing from Plymouth to Africa after the vicar wired him (as the Tregennises are Sterndale cousins) with the tragic news. Sterndale asks Holmes what his suspicions are and is displeased when Holmes will not voice them. After Sterndale leaves, Holmes follows him discreetly. The morning after Holmes comes back to his room, apparently none the wiser for following Sterndale, the vicar arrives in a panic with the news that Mortimer Tregennis has now died in the same way as his sister. The two men, along with Watson, rush to Mortimer's room, and find it foul and stuffy, even though the window has been opened. A lamp is burning on the table beside the dead man. Holmes rushes about, examining many things. The upstairs window seems especially interesting. He also scrapes some ashes out of the lamp and puts them in an envelope.

Solution Holmes deduces how the victims died or went mad and why people present when the death rooms were first opened fainted or felt unwell in each case. He tests his hypothesis by buying a lamp like the one in Tregennis's room, lighting it, and putting some of the collected "ashes" on the smoke guard. The smoke from this powder is so potent a poison that Holmes is immediately struck down. Watson can resist and drags Holmes out of the room just in time. It is clear to Holmes that Mortimer Tregennis poisoned his siblings to acquire the estate and the rest of the money that went to his siblings, but then who killed Mortimer. It is Dr. Sterndale, who left physical evidence at the vicarage clearly implicating himself. Holmes confronts Sterndale, who explains that he loved Brenda for years (but had been unable to marry her because of the current marriage laws which prevented him from divorcing his wife even though she abandoned him years ago) and killed Mortimer in revenge for the cruel murder.

The poison is called *Radix Pedis Diaboli* ("Devil's-foot root" in Latin), Sterndale collected from Africa as a curiosity. The toxic contents of the plant root are vaporized by heat and diffuse into the local atmosphere. He once explained to Mortimer what it was and what it was capable of, who then stole some to murder his siblings by throwing it on the fire just before he left. Mortimer thought Sterndale would be at sea before news reached Plymouth, but Sterndale recognized the poison's effects from the vicar's description of the tragedy and deduced right away what had happened. Holmes's sympathies in this matter lie with Sterndale, and he tells him to go back to his work in Africa.

3} "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client" is one of the 56 Sherlock Holmes short stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It is one of 12 stories in the cycle collected as *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes* and was originally published in *The Strand Magazine* in 1924.

Sir James Damery comes to see Holmes and Watson about his illustrious client's problem (the client's identity is never revealed to the reader, although Watson finds out at the end of the story). It would seem that old General de Merville's young daughter Violet has fallen madly in love with the roguish and sadistic Austrian Baron Adelbert Gruner, whom both Damery and Holmes are convinced is a murderer. The victim was his last wife, of whose murder he was acquitted owing to a legal technicality and a witness's untimely death. His wife met her end in the Splügen Pass.

Violet has a very strong will, and will not hear a word spoken against the Baron. He has even told her about his chequered past, but always spinning the tales to make himself appear the hapless victim and target of calumny.

Holmes also finds out from Damery that the Baron has expensive tastes, is a collector, and a recognised authority on Chinese pottery.

Holmes's first step is to go and see Baron Adelbert Gruner himself, who is amused to see Holmes trying to "play a hand with no cards in it". The Baron makes it quite clear that he will not be moved, and claims that his charm is more potent than even a post-hypnotic suggestion in conditioning Violet's mind to reject anything bad that might be said about him. The meeting ends with an implied threat: Baron Gruner tells the story of Le Brun, a French agent who was crippled for life after being beaten by thugs about a week after making similar inquiries into the Baron's personal business. Holmes gets some help with his mission in the form of Shinwell Johnson, a former criminal who now acts as an informer for Holmes in London's underworld when tackling cases that will not be brought to court (Johnson's usefulness as an informant would be compromised if he was ever called upon to testify). Johnson rakes up Miss Kitty Winter, who was the Baron's last mistress, a woman now destroyed by the rascal. She is bent on revenge, and will do anything to help Holmes if it means laying the Baron low. Kitty tells Holmes that the Baron "collects women", and that he chronicles his conquests in a locked, leather-bound book, which the Baron showed her one night when he'd had a bit too much to drink. The shock at seeing the book nearly cured Kitty of her own infatuation with the Baron, but he was quick to smooth everything over. Holmes realises that this book, written in Gruner's own hand, is the key to curing Violet de Merville of her sad devotion to the scoundrel who has such a firm grip on her heart. Kitty tells Holmes that this book is kept in the Baron's study.

First, Holmes goes to see Violet, bringing Kitty along with him. As might be expected, Violet is utterly proof against any of Holmes's words. She will not hear a word spoken against her fiancé. Kitty then chimes in, explaining exactly what the Baron is in her view, and what he has done to her. Kitty also makes it clear that Violet might well end up dead if she is foolish enough to marry Baron Gruner. Violet's reaction to Kitty is just as cold, and the meeting ends with Holmes narrowly averting a public scene involving the enraged Miss Kitty Winter.

Next, Holmes is attacked by two men, and the newspapers imply that he is near death. A shocked Watson goes to 221B Baker Street only to discover that Holmes's injuries have been exaggerated somewhat to give the impression that he will be out of action for quite a while, if not for good. There is no doubt that Baron Adelbert Gruner sent those men to attack Sherlock Holmes, and Holmes believes it wise to have Shinwell Johnson remove Miss Kitty Winter from the city for a while, as she may also be a target.

Several days later, despite grave reports in the press, Holmes is sufficiently recovered to be out of bed, and although perhaps not quite ready to go out about his business, he is nonetheless forced to do so by circumstances. It seems that the Baron is planning a trip to the United States just before the wedding, and will be leaving in three days. Holmes knows that Gruner will take his incriminating book along with him, never daring to leave it behind in his study. Action must be taken before then.

Holmes orders Watson to learn everything that he can about Chinese pottery in the next 24 hours. Although Watson cannot imagine why he must do this, he knows Holmes well enough to know that it is important to obey; Holmes never does anything without a good reason.

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The Adventure of the Illustrious Client

EDIT

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PUBLISHED IN:

1924

SET IN:

1902

CLIENT:

A member of the British Royal Family, possibly King Edward VII

VILLAIN:

Baron Adelbert Gruner

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Plot

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The next day, Holmes presents Watson with a fake business card styling him as "Dr. Hill Barton", and an actual piece of Ming pottery, a saucer. He is to go to Baron Gruner's house and pose as a collector and connoisseur of Chinese pottery, and try to sell the saucer. Again, Watson cannot quite imagine why, but he does as Holmes tells him. However, things quickly become alarming, as Watson cannot fool the Baron for very long. Gruner realises who has sent Watson, and the climax follows immediately.

As Watson faces his murderous captor, a noise from another room alerts the Baron and he rushes

into his study just in time to see Holmes, his head still bandaged, jump out of the window into the garden. The Baron rushes to the window, and gets vitriol (sulfuric acid) thrown in his face by Kitty Winter, who has been hiding just outside.

Watson ministers to the Baron's injuries until his own doctor arrives.

The Baron is now hideously disfigured, but Holmes says this will not put Violet off him: "it is his moral side, not his physical, that we have to destroy," with his book of conquests, which is now in Holmes's hands. It has the desired effect. When Violet sees the book, written in her fiancé's own handwriting, she finally is made to accept what a rogue he is. An announcement in *The Morning Post* says that the marriage between Baron Adelbert Gruner and Miss Violet de Merville has been called off. It also says vitriol-throwing charges are being pressed against Kitty Winter. Certain extenuating circumstances, provided by Holmes, reduce her sentence to the lowest possible for such an offence.