

**PERUSAL SCRIPT**

# **Sherlock Holmes and the Blue Carbuncle**

by  
**Matthew Ivan Bennett**

Episode 7 of the **RADIO HOUR** Series

based on the short story The Blue Carbuncle  
by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



Newport, Maine

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## **SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE BLUE CARBUNCLE**

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS** (in order of appearance) 10m 1f (Can be doubled to 4 or 5 performers)

Dr. Watson  
Sherlock Holmes  
"Roughs"  
Commissionaire Peterson  
Henry Baker  
Ted the Tippler  
Windigate  
Breckinridge  
Bill  
James Ryder  
Maudsley  
Maggie Oakshott

**FOUR PERSON DOUBLING — 3m 1either**

Actor 1: (M) Dr. Watson

Actor 2: (M) Sherlock Holmes

Actor 3: (M or F) Commissionaire Peterson, Windigate, Breckinridge, Maudsley, Maggie Oakshott, "Roughs"

Actor 4: (M) Henry Baker, Ted the Tippler, Bill, James Ryder

**FIVE PERSON DOUBLING — 4m 1f**

Actor 1: (M) Dr. Watson

Actor 2: (M) Sherlock Holmes

Actor 3: (M) Commissionaire Peterson, Windigate, Breckinridge, "Roughs"

Actor 4: (M) Henry Baker, James Ryder, "Roughs"

Actor 5: (F) Maggie Oakshott, Ted the Tippler, Bill, Maudsley, "Roughs"

**Period Costumes or contemporary clothes**

**Radio Station setting**

**Sound Effects required** (can be Foley, recorded, or a mix of both. Music required.)

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**MATTHEW IVAN BENNETT** is a resident of Plan-B Theatre, listed by American Theater magazine as one of 14 companies nationwide exemplifying social action and civic engagement. At Plan-B, he's premiered several stage and radio plays, including an adaptation of "*Frankenstein*" that won a Utah Broadcasters Association award, and "*Eric(a)*" — which won Best Drama at the United Solo festival in New York. He received the Holland New Voices award from the Great Plains Theatre Commons, has twice been a finalist in screenwriting at Austin Film Festival, and in 2016 was an O'Neill finalist. His short plays have appeared at Chicago's Circle Theatre, Rising Sun in New York, Monkeyman in Toronto, and the Source Festival in DC. Matt is a member of the Dramatists' Guild.

# SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE BLUE CARBUNCLE

## PART ONE

### SCENE 1: A DISREPUTABLE HAT

#### MUSIC

**WATSON:** *(narration)* I had called upon my friend Sherlock Holmes upon the second morning after Christmas, intending to wish him the compliments of the season, but also to be assured of his convalescence—our last adventure had taken its toll.

**F/X:** *Popping fire.*

*(narration)* He was perched upon the sofa in a lavender dressing gown, his hair ruffled, a black clay pipe dangling from his lips. A mound of newspaper lay crumpled on the floor and, as always of late, the daguerreotype of "the woman" sat upon the end table.

*(clearing his throat)*

I daresay he did not hear the door as I came in, so engrossed he was with a very seedy and disreputable hard felt hat—the current subject of his lens and forceps.

*(clearing his throat; louder; to HOLMES)*

Perhaps I interrupt you?

**HOLMES:** Hm? Ah.

*(hyperactive)*

Watson! No. Not at all. I am glad to have a companion with whom I can discuss my results.

*(HOLMES coughs; sniffles)*

**WATSON:** *(narration)* He jerked his thumb in the direction of the oily, old hat. I seated myself in his quilted armchair, warmed my hands before his crackling fire. A sharp gray frost had set in, and the windows were thick with the ice crystals. I steadied myself for another of his forensic dissertations.

*(to HOLMES)*

So, I suppose that battered billycock, as homely as it looks, has some deadly crime linked to it, yes?

**HOLMES:** *(laughing)* No, no. No crime.

**F/X:** *Match strike.*

*(HOLMES taking from a pipe)*

Only one of those whimsical little incidents which will happen when four million primates jostle each other within the space of a few square miles.—Fruitcake?

**WATSON:** Sorry?

**HOLMES:** Fruitcake. Would you fancy a slice? Mrs. Hudson baked it. She claims the cinnamon came from Sri Lanka, but I suspect an archipelago of Indonesia. I beg you have a piece; it is enormous and all that I have eaten for two days.

*(HOLMES takes another toke; a cough)*

**WATSON:** So I gathered: I believe you're trembling—and you still have your cough, Holmes.

**HOLMES:** —Yes or no? My discipline wanes. I am powerless before confections, as you know.—Please decide.

**WATSON:** I suppose a small piece...

**HOLMES:** —Thank you. Begone with it.

*(taking)*

Devour the terrible sweet object.

**F/X:** *Plate, knife, fork.*

**WATSON:** *(narration)* I sliced for myself a moderately liberal helping, out of charity more than temptation—knowing of my friend's predisposition to these manias. It *was* uncommonly comestible.

*(lip-smacking)*

Oh dear. Mmm.

**HOLMES:** Do not taunt. On your plate is addiction in the form of a baked good.

**WATSON:** So the hat, what of it?

*(WATSON chews with enjoyment)*

**HOLMES:** Ah, yes, extraordinary, don't you think? You know Peterson, the commissionaire?

**WATSON:** *(chewing)* That is his hat?

**HOLMES:** No, no; he found it. Its owner is unknown. And I beg that you look upon it, Watson, not as a "battered billycock," but as an intellectual problem. It arrived upon Christmas morning with a good fat goose, which is, I have no doubt, roasting at this moment in front of Peterson's fire.

**WATSON:** *(still chewing)* Indeed?

**HOLMES:** The facts are these: one, the curtain rises, so to speak, four o'clock, Christmas morning:

Peterson was returning from a jollification;

*(demonstrates with whistling)*

two, winding his way down Tottenham Court Road he saw before him, in the buttery gaslight, a tallish man, walking with a slight stagger, a white goose slung over his shoulder; three, as he reached the corner of Goodge Street, a row broke out between this stranger and a knot of roughs:

**ROUGHS & HOLMES:** *(through imagination)* "Tha's a fine-lookin' fowl, Mister." ... Only fair t' share a fowl like that."

*(HOLMES makes mugging noises)*

**WATSON:** Was that a direct quotation?

**HOLMES:** I am priming your imagination, hush.—Four!, one of the roughs knocked off the man's hat.

*(a noise)*

The man drew up his stick to defend his person *(a noise)*, and, stropping it through the air,

*(a noise)*

smashed the window behind him.

*(a noise)*

**F/X:** *(simultaneous with HOLMES' noises)* Hat; whooshing; glass shattering.

Six, Peterson jogged forward to protect the stranger from his assailants, but the man, shocked at having broken the window, and seeing an official rushing toward him, dropped his goose, took to his heels, and vanished—along with the roughs—amid the labyrinth of streets; last, Peterson was left in possession of the field of battle, and, of course, the spoils of victory, in the shape of *this* battered hat and a most unimpeachable Christmas goose. Curtain falls. *(coughs)*

**WATSON:** *(claps)* Bravo. So your task is to restore the hat to its owner?

**HOLMES:** My dear fellow, there lies the problem. It is true that “For Mrs. H. Baker, my darling wife” was printed upon a small card which was tied to the bird’s leg, and it is also true that the initials “H.B.” are legible upon the lining of this hat; but!, as there are some thousands of Bakers, and some dozens of H. Bakers in this city of ours, it is not easy to restore lost property to any one of them.

**WATSON:** What then did Peterson do?

**HOLMES:** Are you listening, Watson? He brought round both hat and goose to me. The goose we retained until this morning, when there were signs that it should be eaten without unnecessary delay. Its finder has carried it off, therefore, to fulfill the ultimate destiny of a goose, while I continue to retain the hat of the unknown gentleman who lost his Christmas dinner.

**WATSON:** Did he not advertise?

**HOLMES:** No.

**WATSON:** Then, what clue could you have as to his identity?

**HOLMES:** Only as much as we can deduce.

**WATSON:** From his hat?

**HOLMES:** Precisely.

**WATSON:** Are you having a go at me? What can you gather from this old battered felt?

**F/X:** *Lens.*

**HOLMES:** Here is my lens. You know my methods. What can *you* gather yourself as to the individuality of the man who has worn this article?

**WATSON:** What can *I* gather?

**HOLMES:** Our capacities are equal, Watson. The difference between us, I tell you, lies in the *exercise* of our perspicacity. You prefer to pummel the bag while I jab, cross, hook, repeat. Jab—

**F/X:** *Punching bag.*

**WATSON:** I do not require a display of your pugilism, Holmes—physical or mental.

**HOLMES:** Prove it to yourself, Watson, we are equal. Our instruments are identically sensitive, allowing—

**WATSON:** I have heard enough about our instruments.

**HOLMES:** What can you gather from the hat? Try. Try.

**WATSON:** (*—hems; yields*) Hand it over.

**HOLMES:** Good man.

*(WATSON grumbles)*

**F/X:** *Handling of the hat.*

**WATSON:** (*narration*) I took the tattered object in my hands and turned it over rather ruefully. It was a very ordinary black hat of the usual...round shape, hard, much the worse for wear. The lining had been of red silk, but was a good deal discolored. There was no maker's name; but, as Holmes had remarked, the initials "H.B." were scrawled upon one side. It was pierced in the brim for a hat-securer, exceedingly dusty, and spotting in several places, although there seemed to have been some attempt to hide the discolored patches by smearing them with ink.

*(huffs; to HOLMES)*

I can see nothing! I see an old hat.

**HOLMES:** On the contrary, Watson, you can see everything. You fail, however, to reason from what you see.

**F/X:** *Punching bag.*

You are too timid in drawing your inferences. You see a left hook, but—

**WATSON:** Then pray tell me what it is that you can infer from this lowly head-piece?

*(narration)*

He picked it up, and gazed at it in his peculiar introspective fashion.

**HOLMES:** (*a deep breath through the nose; then, a deluge:*) The man was highly intellectual, fairly well-to-do within the last three years. He had foresight, but less now than formerly, pointing to a moral retrogression, which, when taken with the decline of his fortunes, seems to indicate some evil influence, probably drink—a stout beer. This may account also for the obvious fact that his wife has ceased to love him.

**WATSON:** My dear Holmes!

**HOLMES:** —He has, however, retained some degree of self-respect. He is a man who leads a sedentary life, goes out little, is out of training entirely, is middle-aged, has grizzled hair which he has had cut within the last few days, and which he anoints with lime cream. Also, it is extremely improbable that he has gas heating in his house.

**WATSON:** You are certainly joking, Holmes! Stop this Christmas prank.

**HOLMES:** Is it possible that even now when I give you these results you are unable to see how they are attained?

**WATSON:** I have no doubt that I am very stupid; but I must confess that I am unable to follow you. How did you deduce that this man was intellectual?

**HOLMES:** It is a question of cubic capacity. A man with so large a brain must have something in it.

**WATSON:** That is pseudo-scientific speculation.

**HOLMES:** Time will tell; in the meanwhile: big hat, big brain. I am confident of his intellect.



**WATSON:** (*grunts*) The decline of his fortunes then?

**HOLMES:** Watson, this hat is three years old. These flat brims curled at the edge came into vogue then.

**WATSON:** Oh hum. Have you been studying the Marshall Ward catalogues?

**HOLMES:** It is a hat of the very best quality. He did not order from Marshall Ward. I would wager Barkers, Derry, & Toms on Kensington High Street.

**WATSON:** Pshah!

**HOLMES:** Look at the band of ribbed silk!—that is either Barkers or Pontings. And if this man could afford to buy so expensive a hat three years ago, and has had no hat since, then he has assuredly gone down in the world.

**WATSON:** Well...what about the “foresight”? The “moral retrogression”?

**HOLMES:** (*laughing*) Here is the foresight: the hat-securer. Never sold with hats. If this man ordered one, it is a sign of a certain amount of foresight. But since we see that he has since broken the elastic, and has not troubled to replace it, it is obvious that he has less foresight now than formerly. On the other hand, he has endeavored to conceal some of these stains upon the felt by daubing them with ink—a sign that he has not entirely lost his self-respect.

**WATSON:** Your reasoning is plausible. No doubt your lens detected the hair, the cream and the perspiration, but the man’s wife? You said—!

**HOLMES:** The hat has not been brushed for weeks. When Mary allows you to jaunt about, my dear Watson, with a week’s accumulation of dust, I shall fear that you also have lost your wife’s affection.

**WATSON:** Mary is a New Woman, she does not concern herself with my dust.

**HOLMES:** She grooms you publicly.

**WATSON:** She never.

**HOLMES:** You are unconscious of it, I know; but Thursday last at dinner she spirited a crumb from your mustache as you recounted your Persian plumbing saga.

**WATSON:** —Nonetheless, this man Baker might be a bachelor. How do—?

**HOLMES:** Nay, he was bringing home the goose as a peace-offering to his wife. Remember the card upon the bird’s leg? Keep up, man.

(*HOLMES coughs*)

**WATSON:** All right, but how on Earth do you deduce that the gas is not laid on in his house? Tell me that.

**HOLMES:** One tallow stain, or even two, might come by chance; but, when I see no less than five?, I think there can be little doubt that the individual must be brought into frequent contact with burning tallow—so drunk at night, perhaps, that he never hangs his hat, lights the candles right over it.

**WATSON:** Very ingenious, Holmes; but this all seems a waste of vitality since—

**SCENE 2: THE DEVIL'S PET BAIT**

**PETERSON:** (*winded*) THE GOOSE, MR. HOLMES!

**WATSON:** (*narration*) Peterson the commissionaire bulled into the apartment, pink upon his cheeks, the daze of astonishment hanging over him.

**PETERSON:** The goo—the goo—the goose, sir!

**HOLMES:** What of it? Has it returned to life and flapped out the kitchen window?

**PETERSON:** More miraculous still, sir! See here! See what my wife dug from its innards!

**WATSON:** (*narration*) He held out his hand, and displayed upon the center of his palm a scintillating blue stone as large as a robin's egg and of such purity and radiance that it twinkled like an electric point in the dark hollow of his hand.

**F/X:** *Bling.*

**HOLMES:** (*whistles*) By Newton, Peterson! This is treasure trove indeed. I suppose you know what you have got?

**PETERSON:** Sure as I do, sir, a diamond! A precocious stone! It bites into glass as though it were putty. Look here.

**F/X:** *Scraping.*

**HOLMES:** —I believe you; no need for a demonstration. Give it here, Peterson. ... Ah, yes, no doubt; it is more than *a* precious stone, Commissionaire. It is *the* precious stone, of which we have all read of late.

**WATSON:** Do you mean to say this stone...?

**HOLMES:** Oh yes, Watson.

**WATSON:** The Countess of Morcar's blue carbuncle?

**HOLMES:** Precisely so.

**PETERSON:** Is that a diamond?

**HOLMES:** Sapphire; a variety of corundum. I ought to know, seeing that I have read the advertisement about it in *The Times* every day lately. It is absolutely unique; its value can only be conjectured. The reward of a thousand pounds is certainly not within a twentieth of its market price.

**PETERSON:** A thousand pounds! Great Lord of mercy!

**WATSON:** (*narration*) The commissionaire plumped down into the settee, gaping from one to the other of us like a pigeon deep in thought.

**PETERSON:** A thousand pounds. That's as much as hundred pounds times ten.

**HOLMES:** By Pythagoras it is, Peterson.—Yes, that is the reward, though I know the Countess would part with half her fortune if she could recover the gem. It is said her sentiment—

**WATSON:** *If* she could? You twirl it even now in your fingers, Holmes.

**HOLMES:** And I shall return it, upon my honor—but no sooner than I pierce the dark circumstances of its theft; to do otherwise would endanger the Countess.

**WATSON:** Oh stuff it; you want only to impress her.

**HOLMES:** I—What? I want to protect my Lady. My duty as an Englishman—

*(HOLMES coughs)*

**WATSON:** You want a pretext for a meeting.

**HOLMES:** I beg your pardon?

**WATSON:** You do not need the money. Send the stone back with Peterson.

**HOLMES:** No. The misdeeds connected to the gem must be unearthed.

*(HOLMES coughs)*

**WATSON:** Holmes. Avail yourself of the holiday. You are still weak with influenza.

**HOLMES:** Nonsense. I am brimming with energy.

**WATSON:** You are brimming with fruitcake. You are also lovesick.

**HOLMES:** Lovesick?! Ha.

**WATSON:** Do not deny it. The great Sherlock Holmes is not immune to the "softer passions." You certainly had me convinced, once; but ever since that business with the hell hound you have been discomfited.

**HOLMES:** I have been overrun with microbes. My discomfiture is utterly unconnected to the woman.

**WATSON:** I may have missed the tallow stains on Mr. Baker's hat, but the open display of that American woman's photograph—for weeks now—has not gone unnoticed.

**PETERSON:** What American woman?

**WATSON:** Confess.

**HOLMES:** May we return to the case?

**PETERSON:** Is that her?

**HOLMES:** Do not touch that.

**WATSON:** I have your scent, my friend.

**HOLMES:** The American woman bears nothing whatsoever on the problem. The Countess—

**WATSON:** The Countess of Morcar is a connected and sociable patron of the theatre—I also read *The Times*—and you hope she will introduce you to parties who may have information regarding "the woman's" whereabouts. What say you to that deduction?

**HOLMES:** I say it teeters upon assumption.

**WATSON:** Give the gem to Peterson. Peterson, you return it. Our friend is lonely at Christmas; I diagnose him with grit in his "sensitive instrument."

**PETERSON:** His what?

*(HOLMES coughs; through WATSON'S next line)*

**WATSON:** You cannot even pronounce her name, Holmes. You cannot say "Irene—"!

**F/X:** *Bang!*

**PETERSON & WATSON:** Ahhh!

**HOLMES:** *May we please return to the matter?*

**PETERSON:** What in the devil's hooves was that?

**HOLMES:** That was a Chinese firecracker—ignited with my pipe, tossed under the sofa when your attentions were abstracted, and the sound of its fuse covered by my cough. Let it be a lesson to you both. Moving on!

*(WATSON huffs)*

**F/X:** *Newspaper rustling.*

According to *The Times*, the gem was lost at the Hotel Claridge on the twenty-second of December. A plumber by the name of John Horner was accused of having nipped it from the lady's jewel case. The evidence against Horner was so strong the case was referred to the Assizes. The stone was not found either upon his person or in his rooms. Now, I shall not permit the same villain a second opportunity to sack the Countess; therefore, whatever my motives, John, the question for us to solve—supposing I can rely on you—is the sequence of events leading from a rifled jewel case to the gizzard of a goose in Tottenham Court Road. Peterson, fetch a pencil and a slip of paper.

**PETERSON:** Sir?

**HOLMES:** We will advertise in the evening papers, for Mr. H. Baker.—Fetch.

**PETERSON:** Yes, sir.

**F/X:** *Rummaging; a pencil and paper; scrawling as HOLMES dictates.*

**HOLMES:** Write this—

**WATSON:** Holmes.

**HOLMES:** "Found at the corner of Goodge Street: goose and black felt hat. Mr. H. Baker can have the same by applying at 6:30 this evening at 221B, Baker Street." Is that clear and concise?

**PETERSON:** I think so, sir.

**WATSON:** But will he see it?

**HOLMES:** He is sure to keep an eye on the papers, since to a poor man the loss was a heavy one. He was clearly so scared by his mischance in breaking the window, and by Peterson, that he thought of nothing but flight; but, since then, he must have bitterly regretted the impulse which caused him to bumble his bird. Then, again, the introduction of his name will cause him to see it, for everyone who knows the H. Baker minus one goose will direct his attention to it.—Run to the advertisers, Peterson; have this put in the papers.

*(he claps in order to rush PETERSON)*

To the papers!

**PETERSON:** To which, sir?

**HOLMES:** *The Globe, The Star, The Pall Mall, St. James's, The Evening News, The Standard, The Echo,* any others that will accept English coin. Begone.

*(HOLMES claps again)*

**PETERSON:** Very well, sir, straight away.—Only, wait, what did we decide to do with the stone?—in the meantime?

**HOLMES:** I shall keep it safe.

**PETERSON:** But do we arouse the Countess? ...To the situation?

**WATSON:** Yes.

**HOLMES:** No.

**WATSON:** Yes.

**HOLMES:** No, because the identity of the crook is uncertain; it could be someone close to the Countess.

**WATSON:** You think that this man Horner is innocent?

**HOLMES:** I cannot tell. Do not send word as of yet, Peterson. Make haste!

*(HOLMES claps)*

**PETERSON:** I will, sir...by which I mean, I won't. Send word. I mean I will make haste—

**HOLMES:** I understood. You may flee.

**PETERSON:** Right. Good morning, then.

*(PETERSON leaves)*

**HOLMES:** Ah! No, hold, Peterson.

**PETERSON:** Holding.

**HOLMES:** On your way back you must buy a goose: we must have a replacement for this gentleman in place of the one which your family is now devouring. Watson, may I lend the two bob from your left coat pocket to Peterson?

**WATSON:** My left coat...?

**HOLMES:** Here you are, Peterson.

**F/X:** *Coins.*

Thank you, Watson.—What are your instructions?

**PETERSON:** To the papers, new goose, nary a word to the Countess.

**HOLMES:** Yes. Now run.

**PETERSON:** Right. Doctor.

**WATSON:** *(narration)* As the commissioner fled, Holmes took up the stone and held it against the light.

**F/X:** *Bling.*

**HOLMES:** It is a bonny thing. Just see how it glints and sparkles.

*(HOLMES coughs)*

**WATSON:** Very impressive, yes.

**HOLMES:** Gems such as these are the devil's pet baits. Every facet of it reflects a bloody deed. There have been two murders, an acid-throwing, a suicide, and eleven robberies brought about for the sake of these hundred-fifty grams of aluminum oxide.

**WATSON:** Holmes, listen to me. I was quite serious before.

**HOLMES:** As was I.

**WATSON:** You cannot live like this indefinitely, oscillating between cocaine and ambition.

**HOLMES:** I have only had fruitcake this week.

**WATSON:** Scratching at your violin alone, the photograph of an unavailable woman staring back at you—you are yet a young man, Holmes, act like one.

**HOLMES:** Did Mary set you on this track?

**WATSON:** No. We are both concerned. It is Christmas time, Holmes.

**HOLMES:** Well, I thank you both for your distress on my behalf. However, at the moment, I cannot fully unwrap it since I am busy with a hat, a goose and a priceless gem. Now, do you imagine that Baker had anything to do with the matter?

**WATSON:** Holmes.

**HOLMES:** *I think it is much more likely Baker had no idea the bird which he carried was worth more than solid gold.*

*(HOLMES, toking)*

**MUSIC**

**STATION BREAK**

### **SCENE 3: THE DISJECTA MEMBRA**

**WATSON:** *(narration)* I carried on my professional round that day, so distracted I lost count of an old woman's pulse. I cursed Holmes beneath my breath, began again. All day I dwelled on 221-B and the single-minded savant pacing within it.

**F/X:** *Wind.*

*(BAKER cheerfully whistles)*

At half-past six I hurried back along Baker Street when, on the curb, I beheld a giant of a man wearing a Scotch bonnet and a ragged black frock coat buttoned up to his chin. He was waiting in the bright rainbow semicircle thrown from the fanlight. Just about to greet the fellow, the door flew open, and

Holmes motioned me and the large man up the steps and into his study.

*F/X: A crackling fire again.*

**HOLMES:** Mr. H. Baker, I believe.

**WATSON:** (*narration*) —Said Holmes with an easy air of geniality.

**HOLMES:** Is it Howard, Herbert or Henry? I've narrowed it down.

**BAKER:** Henry, sir, after the Lancaster kings. My mother had high hopes for me.

**HOLMES:** Indeed? Pray, take this chair by the fire, Mr. Baker. It is a cold night, and I observe that your circulation is more adapted for summer than for winter. Watson, you have come at the right time.—Is that your hat, Mr. Baker?

**BAKER:** Yes, that is undoubtedly and tragically my hat. Originally it was a Pontings; now it is rather wanting.

**WATSON:** (*narration*) He was a bell tower of a man, with rounded shoulders, a massive block head, and a broad, intelligent face, sloping down to a pointed beard of grizzled brown. The touch of red in nose and cheeks, and the tremor of his extended hand, recalled Holmes' surmise as to his habits. His lank wrists protruded from his sleeves without a sign of cuff or shirt. He spoke in a slow staccato fashion, culling his words with care; he gave the impression of a man of learning and letters who had ill-usage at the hands of Lady Fortune.

*F/X: Match strike.*

**HOLMES:** We have retained these things for some day, Mr. Baker, because we expected to see an advertisement from you giving your address.

*(taking)*

I am at a loss to know why you did not advertise.

**BAKER:** (*a shamefaced laugh*) Shillings have not been so flush with me as they once were. I had no doubt that the roughs who assaulted me had toted off both hat and bird. I did not care to throw coins after the bills which I'd seen flutter into oblivion.

**HOLMES:** Very naturally.—By the way, about the bird...we were compelled to eat it.

**BAKER:** To eat it!

**HOLMES:** Yes, it would have been no use to anyone had we not done so. But I presume this other goose upon the sideboard, which is about the same weight, and perfectly fresh, will answer your purpose equally well?

**BAKER:** Oh, certainly, certainly! Many thanks.

**HOLMES:** Of course, we still have the feathers, legs, intestines, and so on of your own bird if you wish—

**BAKER:** (*a hearty laugh*) They might be useful to me as relics of my adventure, but beyond that I can hardly see how the *disjecta membra* of my late acquaintance would be of use to me.

*(BAKER chuckles)*

**HOLMES:** Indeed.

*(HOLMES chuckles)*

**WATSON:** *(narration)* Sherlock Holmes glanced across at me with a sly shrug at the man's Latin learning, and, no doubt, at the fact of Henry Baker's indifference about the bird's "disjecta."

**HOLMES:** Here is your hat, then, and there your bird, Mr. Baker.—Would it bore you to tell me where you got the other one from? I am somewhat of a fowl fancier, you see, and I have seldom seen a better-grown goose.

**BAKER:** Certainly, sir, the fancy fowl came from the "Alpha" Inn. Near the Museum? This year our good host Windigate instituted a goose club, by which a few pence every week we each received an ornithological Christmas. My pence were duly paid and the rest is familiar. I am much indebted to you, sir, for a Scotch bonnet is fitted neither to my years nor my gravity. It's Pontings for me.

**WATSON:** *(narration)* With a comical pomposity of manner he bowed solemnly to us both, switched the bonnet for the billycock, and strode off upon his way.

*(BAKER whistling)*

**HOLMES:** *(a clap)* So much for Henry Baker; it is quite certain he knows nothing whatever about the theft.—Are you hungry, Watson?

**WATSON:** Not particularly.

**HOLMES:** Then I suggest—

**WATSON:** Unless Mrs. Hudson's fruitcake—?

**HOLMES:** Later—and I told you so.—We ought to turn our dinner into a supper and follow up this clue while it is still red hot.

*(HOLMES coughs)*

**WATSON:** We "ought" to send Peterson, Holmes, you look afever.

**HOLMES:** Peterson can scarcely multiply.

**WATSON:** You are not at your top form.

**HOLMES:** In my worst form I would chase this clue. Come Watson!

**MUSIC: STING**

#### **SCENE 4: THE "ALPHA"**

**F/X:** *Church bell tolling; carriages.*

**WATSON:** *(narration)* It was a bitter night, so we drew on our ulsters and wrapped cravats about our throats. Outside, the stars shone coldly in a cloudless sky, and the breath of the passers-by blew out into



smoke like so many pistol shots. My friend's feet, it seemed, had invisible wings, despite his ailing lungs;

*(pants)*

I struggled to stay apace as my shoes rang out crisply and loudly down Oxford Street. Within twenty minutes we were in Bloomsbury at the "Alpha," a public house possessed of a distinctly...plebian elegance.

**MUSIC: PIANO (IN THE BAR)**

Leading our tour, as always, Holmes thrust open the door startling the half-conscious tippler at a nearby table.

*(TED THE TIPPLER mutters; falls asleep snoring; fitful)*

**HOLMES:** Fascinating.—Two glasses, barkeep! Frothy and frigid! Your beer should be excellent if it is as good as your geese!

*(HOLMES coughs)*

**F/X:** *Glass, rag.*

**WINDIGATE:** *(a sandpaper throat; drunk)* My geese?

**WATSON:** *(narration)* The reed-thin proprietor was as bewildered as he was drunk. His eyes bugged into uncertainty as he scratched and twirled at the tussock of white hair sprouting from his Adam's apple. Holmes plowed on.

**HOLMES:** Yes. I was speaking only half an hour ago to Mr. Henry Baker, who was a member of your illustrious goose-club.

**WINDIGATE:** That so.

*(snorts up some phlegm)*

You know 'ard luck 'Enry, then?

**TED THE TIPPLER:** 'Enry!

**WINDIGATE:** Quiet.

**HOLMES:** Yes, we are old pals—knew him before the “‘ard luck.” So, again, the old boy was bragging about your geese.

**TED THE TIPPLER:** *(underneath WINDIGATE)* Ducks, ducks, ducks, ducks—

**WINDIGATE:** Mm. Well, you see, them's not *our* geese, sir.

**TED THE TIPPLER:** Geese! Run, 'Enry!

**WINDIGATE:** I said quiet.—So them's not our geese, sir. Not official-like.

*(WINDIGATE scratches)*

**HOLMES:** Indeed! Whose, then? I must know the supplier, I simply must. Please.

**WINDIGATE:** Well, em, I get the two dozen from a salesman in Leadenhall Market.—You wantin' the 'ouse beer?

(WINDIGATE snorts)

**TED THE TIPPLER:** Onna 'ouse!

**WINDIGATE:** Muffle your gob, Ted!—So the 'ouse beer?

**HOLMES:** Your best, please.—And by the way, I know some of them. Which was it?

F/X: *Beers poured.*

**WINDIGATE:** Sorry?

**HOLMES:** Which was it?

**WINDIGATE:** Which was what?

**HOLMES:** What was the name of the salesman? I am well-regarded by many of the salesmen.

F/X: *Pouring stops.*

**WINDIGATE:** You're a bit of a waggin' chin, ain't you?

**WATSON:** You haven't the slightest.

**WINDIGATE:** (*chuckles*) He knows it.

**WATSON:** He's "information vegetable, animal, and mineral."

**WINDIGATE:** (*chuckles*) [Knows the kings of England and quotes the fights historical]?

**HOLMES:** (*a forced chuckle*) So, the—

**WATSON:** "From Marathon to Waterloo in order categorical"—

**HOLMES:** So, the—

**WINDIGATE & WATSON:** (*half-singing*) "VERY WELL ACQUAINTED, TOO, WITH MATTERS MATHEMATICAL / [HE] UNDERSTAND[S] EQUATIONS—"

**ALL:** (*Including TED THE TIPPLER*) "BOTH THE SIMPLE AND QUADRATICAL"

**HOLMES:** —Yes, I do. So amusing—and, you know, I was discussing binomial theorems with a salesman of Leadenhall the other day.

(*pause*)

(*WATSON sighs*)

**WINDIGATE:** Do tell.

**TED THE TIPPLER:** Go on.

F/X: *Pouring starts again.*

**HOLMES:** Well, it was a side-splitter. My mercantile friend *insisted* that the binomial coefficients appear in the *Golden* triangle when, of course, it is *Pascal's*.

**13 MORE PAGES TO THE END OF THE SCRIPT**

## GLOSSARY

**Assizes:** a trial session, civil or criminal, held periodically in specific locations in England, usually by a judge of a superior court.

**Billycock:** any of several round-crowned brimmed hats of felt, such as the bowler.

**Commissionaire:** a uniformed attendant

**Dock:** jailhouse

**Flaring:** (as in "flaring stalls") lit by gas.

**New Woman:** refers to a feminist ideal that emerged in the late 19th century and had a profound influence on feminism well into the 20th.

**"Pink 'un":** a special weekly edition of football news; printed on pink paper.

**Scotch bonnet:** a brimless cap, usually wool; always called a "Tam o' Shanter."

**Ulster:** a long, loose, heavy overcoat, originally of Irish frieze, now also of any of various other woolen cloths.