The Commandeered Corpse



November 12th, 1890

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(Written by Stephen Dewhurst, Graphic Edition by Mário Ciríaco)

Intro

Clinging tightly to our coats to keep out the bite of a fast-approaching London winter, we arrive at 221 B Baker Street to find Sherlock Holmes standing outside, in the midst of a discussion with a flustered looking Inspector Lestrade. As we get close enough to hear them, Holmes is asking a question with a particularly aggravating air to which Lestrade responds, "I'm not asking for your help! All I ask is that I be allowed to do my job without you or your brother interfering. But since one of you has, I must turn to the other to set things straight!"

"I am hardly my brother's keeper," begins Holmes with a particular ennui, "But as you have come all this way to ask for my help..." Lestrade begins to protest, but Holmes continues, "it would be rude of me to refuse. Unfortunately, I do suspect that I will indisposed for most of the day. I assure you, Wiggins and his associates are more than capable of uncovering the clues that you cannot - whether or not my brother has interfered."

Leaving Lestrade in a furious silence, Holmes turns to us.

"A murder!" he exclaims, perhaps a touch over-dramatically. "At the Staple. Not uncommon, it's true, but poison is a bit unusual. And stranger still is that the body was collected not by the police, but rather by gentlemen from the Special Branch, a detail that our friend the inspector has made some objection to. If the government was involved I'm certain that my brother won't want you poking about, so I do hope you'll pay him a visit and ask some uncomfortable questions. I'd love to come help, but," he says, glancing at his pocket watch, "I rather expect I'm in store for a more private audience."

Just then a handsome pulls up and a pair of men in crisp suits and bowlers emerge. The shorter of the two addresses Holmes, "Your brother wants a word with you, if you don't mind."

"Yes," Holmes responds, betraying a hint of excitement. "I expect he does. Well Wiggins, best of luck on your own investigation. Duty calls!" He follows the men into the carriage, leaving you standing in the street in awkward silence with a red-faced Lestrade.

Wiggins cautiously addresses him, "Inspector, would you be so kind as to fill us in on the matter?"

Lestade pauses, takes a deep breath, and exhales. Having regained a bit of composure, he addresses us. "As I informed Holmes, a man we've identified as Henry Irving died at the Staple last night. When we arrived, the Special Branch had been there already and had made off with the victim's body. They returned him without fanfare this morning, but there's no way to know what they might have removed, making my job particularly difficult. While I am not asking for your help, I would appreciate it if you would let me know if you find anything that might help fill in the holes left by the Special Branch. You know where to find me."

West-Center

5 WC

We ask the carriage drivers about the preceding night and find that none who saw the victim. When Wiggins inquires about anything of note, one mentions that he drove a panicked woman to the Spanish embassy. Another driver drove a man from Surrey Street to Bath Terrace and after the man left, the driver found a fresh blood on the seat, much to his annoyance.

14 WC

Disraeli O'Brian jots down the names we give him and returns with several files from the back office. "Mr. Irving," he begins, "was a model citizen. No brushes with the law to speak of. His daughter is another matter, although her crimes are as petty as they are numerous. As for Mr. Valentine, he's spent nearly as much time in Milbank as out of it. Burglary and pickpocketing it looks like, from a very young age. I hope you'll find that helpful."

16 WC

An old, abandoned building is marked by a faded sign reading Twining & Co in faded paint. A police officer stands watch at the door, but has little to offer other than that they responded to reports of screaming from the place last night, but that by the time they got there the guy was dead. You'll have to go to the morgue to find out more. Looking around inside, you find a rickety wooden chair with ropes tied around the arms. The area around the chair is stained with blood. Nearby, some of the old shelves have been recently knocked over and there's staining from a small spray of blood. It seems likely that there was a fight and that the loser ended up in that chair.

17 WC

We arrive at Somerset House and spend the better part of an hour pouring through old records and certificates. Strangely, although Henry and Margaret Irving were meticulous in most of their bookkeeping and filings, we can find no record at all of Mr. Irving's birth.

But matters relating to the case are not the only ones to come to light at Somerset House this day. Stirred by concern over recent events, Wiggins looks into his own past and discovers that on the very same day that he was dropped off at the orphanage he called home for most of his youth, another boy of the same age and curiously similar description was dropped off at a different orphanage. We can find no more details about him, save that he was named Edward.

35 WC

The Staple is not a reputable establishment by any means and while a death on the premises isn't an everyday occurrence, it's not unusual enough to frighten off the normal clientele. This early in the day, there aren't many and the few that are there don't seem like reliable witnesses. The bartender, however, was here last night and was sober enough to shed some light on the matter we've come to ask him about. He doesn't seem interested in talking at first, but Wiggins changes his mind with a tenner and he introduces himself as Franklin Packer.

"It was odd," he starts, "No one knew the guy who died, but no one noticed him neither. Not until that looker joined him. Don't get me wrong, we get ladies in here from time to time. Just not..." he struggles to find the words while making a somewhat obscene motion around his chest and raising his eyebrow suggestively, "that quality of lady. They talked for a few minutes in Spanish I think and then the guy starts choking and falls out of his chair. The woman screams, everyone jumps, and some short bloke with a hook nose jumps in to try to save him. Tears the man's coat open to help him breath, but it wasn't enough. So the man's dead, the short guy disappears, the lady bolts, and I'm left with nothing but a corpse and unpaid tabs. To make matters worse it's not even the police that show up, it's some other government types. They flash some fancy badges, take the body, and don't even bother to

thank me for keeping this unsavory lot from lootin' the sod."

As he finishes his harrowing tale, you notice a young boy watching you from the back door. A blond-haired teen, the boy returns your stares without batting an eye. Frank notices your gaze and glances back, "Oh don't mind him, that's Erik. Just one of the street kids I let help me out on busy nights. Better than them wondering the streets after dark, right?"

"Could we talk to him?" asks Wiggins, avoiding the subject of whether it's in a child's best interests to work at the Staple.

Frank glances back questioningly and Erik shrugs and comes over to the bar to join us.

"Were you here last night?" asks Wiggins, leaning down to talk to the boy at eye level.

"Yes," he says.

"Did you see anything?"

"The short guy that ran off at the end, he wasn't here to drink. Just came in a few minutes after the corpse did and stood by the bar, watchin' him. Didn't order nuthin' neither, just watched."

"And then he tried to help when Mr. Irving - er, the corpse - fell over?"

"Robbed him more like. When he ran out he took the guy's jacket and knocked over the guy's whore."

"Language!" barks Frank.

Erik is indignant. "But she was! Em says she was!"

"Em?" Wiggins asks.

The bartender interjects, "Another one of my, er, younger helpers. Cute girl, but a bit of an attitude."

Erik and Frank have nothing more to contribute so we see ourselves out.

50 WC

Wiggin's raps on the Irvings' door several times before it opens to reveal a young girl perhaps 12 or so years old. "Yes?" she asks, somewhat suspiciously.

Wiggins introduces us, "We'd like to speak to you and your mother if you don't mind. About your father's death."

The girl turns to look back into the house. You can hear sobbing. "Fine," she says with a stern look, "but be careful with your words. Mother has been through quite a lot and if you upset her further I will see you out."

Despite the pall of misery in the house, you can't help notice that it is both very well-furnished and excellently maintained. We find Margaret Irving in the sitting room, her eyes bloodshot and crying into a handkerchief.

After a few minutes of consolation, Wiggins has talked the widow into a calmer state and gently asks about her husband.

"Henry was a good man, the best. He was away a lot, but he had to be." Mrs. Irving's words provoke a look of disdain from her daughter. "He did, Emma. He works very hard to support us. My husband was a merchant of specialty goods you see and his job required him to travel the world for extended periods. I'm afraid that he wasn't here for much of Emma's younger years and in fact had just returned from a two year trip to the west indies. I thought that he might stay for a while this time, but then....but then..." she breaks down in tears.

"Mrs. Irving," Wiggins interrupts delicately, "was there anything odd about your husband when he returned? Or anything else odd about this week?"

She sniffs and tries to compose herself, "A bit, yes. Yes, I would say so. We didn't have mail that he was coming, so it was a bit of a surprise. He showed up very late, after Emma and I were both asleep. Just slipped in went straight to taking a bath. Startled me at first, but I was so glad to see him when he turned out not to be a burglar. I asked if we might go out the following day to celebrate his coming back, but he said he'd taken ill and needed to stay out of the sun, though we haven't had much of that recently. And after he didn't come home last night I feared the worst. To calm myself, I looked for a silver ring Henry bought me a few years ago and seem to have lost it. I could have sworn it was next to our bed, but when I went to look for it this morning, it was gone. And one last thing - last night I heard Henry arguing with someone outside, but when he came in he didn't want to talk about it and said he needed to go out for a business meeting."

"It was Mr. Alexander," Emma interjects. "Across the street. He's always trying to tell us how to live. Needs to mind his own business."

Sensing an uncomfortable argument brewing, Wiggins interjects, "You've both been very helpful," says Wiggins. "Before we go, could we look at Henry's luggage? If we can find out why he came back early, it might help us discover what happened to him."

"Of course, anything," says Mrs. Irving and shows up upstairs. Left alone, we look through Henry Irving's bags to discover traveling clothes in excellent condition, a ticket with the West Indies Steamship company, and a nearly empty jar of black hair dye.

We wish Mrs. Irving and her daughter good luck and depart.

51 WC

Wiggins taps confidently on the door across the street from the Irving's and a moment later we see the window blinds separate a few inches to reveal curious, but suspicious eyes. Wiggins flashes the occupant his most winning smile and we hear a latch slide open on the other side of the door. As it opens we get a glimpse of a dark, untidy home brimming with what appear to be old newspapers. Before we can get a closer look an old, portly man blocks our view.

"Yes? What do you want?"

"Pardon us sir," responds Wiggins, "But we're investigating the death of your neighbor, Mr. Irving."

Mr. Alexander lets out a most disdainful harumph, "Neighbor? Yea, I s'pose he was, but naught more'n a few months out of the year at best. Always out on adventures, leavin' his poor wife and monstrous child behind. Then he'd come back all gifts an' smiles, thinkin' he ain't done nothin' wrong. And the wife!" he waves his hand aggressively across the street, "Always let him get away with it! Pretending to be happy! But no sooner would he get back on a ship than she'd dive back into a bottle. I'd feel sorry for 'er if she wasn't also leavin' 'er daughter to do whatever she please."

"I see," says Wiggins, trying to calm her, "And did Mr. Irving return recently?"

"Matter of fact he did! Two days ago. Lookin' more nervous than usual. Maybe worried that his missus had been stepping out on him this time - not that she would, mind you. She has plenty of suitors, but loyal to a fault she is."

"Suitors you say?" asks Wiggins, "Any you can remember the name of?"

"None of my business," Mr. Alexander replies, but continues, "But there was one named Johnny I think. Came by a few times recently. Tall bloke with a fancy cane."

"I see. And did you see him or Mr. Irving last night? Before he died."

"No, not the suitor. But Henry, yes. This block was a might busier than usual last night and not

to my liking. Earlier in the evening a woman showed up. Tall and dark skinned, even prettier than Mrs. Irving if you can believe it, and in a foul mood. Got in a fight with Henry and then stormed off. Not an hour later, Henry leaves, followed by that wretch I've seen skulking about. And just after that, the daughter sneaks out her window, like she often does."

"A wretch?" asks Wiggins, "Could you describe him?"

"Short guy with a strange nose and ragged clothes. He's been followin' Henry since he got back."

"Thank you! You've been so much help!" says Wiggins. "If you don't mind my asking, how do you know all this?"

Mr. Alexander looks very offended, "Mind your own business!" he yells and slams the door.

76 WC

We're met by Mrs. Warren, the proprietor. "Are you here about the missing girl?" she asks.

"Um. Yes? Yes," says Wiggins, indicating to us to play along. "What can you tell us?"

"Oh thank goodness!" she exclaims, "I've been worried sick. I don't normally bother with what my guests do, but the girl was so sweet and...sad, I think. Didn't speak more'n a few words of english neither, but just her face told a story of heartbreak. Gorgeous as she was I was worried about her wandering London alone, much less this neighborhood at night. When she set out yesterday evening I was scared she might not come back and I was right."

"We're going to help find her, but we need to see her room."

"Yes, of course. Follow me."

She leaves us alone in the woman's room, where we discover a single suitcase contained surprisingly luxurious traveling clothes along with an assortment of make-up, jewelry, and a purse of spanish dollars. There is also a ticket from Aberdeen Navigation Co. We return to the lobby and assure Mrs. Warren that we will find her missing customer before taking our leave.

East Center

20 EC

A clerk for the West Indies Steamship company greets us from behind his desk and introduces himself as a Mr. Yarrow. We explain about Mr. Irving's death and ask if he was a recent passenger on any of Mr. Yarrow's ships. He mutters as he flips through log books.

"Irving.....Irving....no. No Irving on the crew or passenger list of the Dragonfly and she's the only ship we had come in in the last week. But it does ring a bell, let me check..." Mr. Yarrow leaves and comes back with a thick log book a minute later. "Yes, here it is. A passenger of ours several times in the last few years - traveling from here to Trinidad and back, always through Bilbao. It's a shame to lose his business. Also a shame about the murder, of course."

30 EC

Henry Ellis shows us into his office and asks how he can be of service. We explain that we are looking into the death of Henry Irving, but Ellis seems disinterested with a local murder until we mention that he was speaking spanish and that the special branch was involved.

"Ah," he says, now much more interested, "then that might be something indeed! In that case, I might be of some help to you, but you must hold this in the strictest of confidence." He glances around as though the walls might be listening, but then continues. "There are rumors that the upcoming Inventor's Symposium will have a number of backroom deals and that all the major powers are jockeying to arrive with the most impressive technologies to showcase their power and attract the attention of the world's leading scientists and engineers. Rumor also has it that

the Spanish military is developing a weapon that will put them out in front in that regard. And," he leans in, whispering nearly to the point of being inaudible, "I have heard that last week, they lost those blueprints. If Mr. Irving was involved, in any way, his death would not be unexpected."

"Thanks for the tip."

35 EC

Quinton scoffs when we mention the case. "Yea, I heard. They brought in Squire, right? Means they've got nothing. The man's been involved in at least twenty cases I know of, but our boys at Scotland Yard never make anything stick. This'll be no different."

36 EC

We are met by Edward Hall, who courteously welcomes us in out of the cold. When we inquire about any sort of record for Henry Irving, Mr. Hall responds, "No, nothing of the sort. A model gentleman, by all accounts. And an accomplished merchant by the looks of it. I can't say the same for his daughter though. She's been here more than a few times on all the usual charges. Pickpocketing, vandalism, delinquency."

"I see," says Wiggins, "And what about our other deceased? Rodney Valentine?"

Hall shrugs and slides a thick file across his desk. "Mr. Valentine was a career criminal. A pickpocket to be exact. No violent crimes though, so he had that going for him. I doubt the city will miss him, but he wasn't so bad. Certainly didn't deserve what he got. He died at the old Twining & Co building if you want to look into it."

We ask Mr. Hall if anyone has been brought in in connection to the case and he has us escorted to see Mr. Squire, a local chemist that Lestrade suspects in connection to nearly any case involving poison. We find ourselves in a holding room where we're left with the Mr. Squire, an older gentleman with a thin crown of white hair and a scowl that looks like it was carved into his face. He looks up at us sideways and mutters, "Got nothing to say more'n what I already said."

Wiggins gives the man a cheery smile, "And would you might repeating whatever that was?"

He looks at us suspiciously, "Just that I didn't do nothing. Was out all night at the Red Boar, anyone will tell you."

"Yes," replies Wiggins, "I'm sure you were. But did you sell poison to anyone recently? Something that might have been used to kill Mr. Irving?"

"I sell lotsa things, and lotsa things'll kill you if you don't take'm properly. Might be someone used something from my shop to kill someone, ain't no business of mine."

On that cheerful note we bid the man fair well and are on our way.

38 EC

Sir Jasper Meeks meets us and shows us the body. Irving was a handsome and strong man in good health and his body has no wounds aside from a cut on his forehead - presumably from colliding with the table as he collapsed. His complexion is quite different from the normal London native, with a deep tan hinting at long periods spent in warmer climates.

With Mr. Irving's body giving little clue as to his undoing, we ask Sir Meeks if we might also see the body of Rodney Valentine, the other death mentioned in the newspaper. With a somewhat troubled expression, he shows us to the vagrant's body and pulls back the linen to reveal a grotesque sight. Not all of us manage to contain disapproving grumbling. "As you can see," beings Sir Meeks, "Mr. Valentine's death was not a pleasant one. It was preceded by the breaking of both his arms, one knee-cap, and five ribs. There are also marks on his wrists from the ropes than bound him. The pain he suffered

was brought to an end by a slash across his throat, made by a knife, but one significantly larger than the one found at the scene of his death."

50 EC

We arrive at the residence of Johnny Happ and are met by his butler, who tries and fails to stop Wiggins from talking his way into the manor. Before he can figure out a way to see us out, Mr. Happ himself pokes his head in from the sitting room and asks how he can be of service.

"We're here about the death of Mr. Henry Irving." Wiggins begins and the charming, relaxed look on Johnny's face vanishes in the blink of an eye.

"Mr. Irving, you say? Dead? I didn't do it!"

"We didn't say that you did-"

"But I didn't! That's why you're here, isn't it? To arrest me! Or worse, turn me over to that vulture pretending to be a man - Langdale Pike? No, I beg of you, do not do this. It's true that I have been courting Margaret, but only at her encouragement, I assure you. She sends me letters that are most...enticing. But when I stop by she seems distant and is distressed whenever I mention the correspondence directly. The entire situation is most frustrating and confusing! To think that such a gorgeous woman stays shut up in her home, waiting for her husband to return from traveling the world. It's absurd! Nevertheless, I would never do him harm! I didn't even know he was back."

"And where we you last night?"

"Here," he says, incredulously. "All night. You can ask Percy."

"He was," comes the halfhearted response from the butler.

52 EC

We enter the Rat and Raven and are surprised to find the establishment in an all-together somber mood. Its usual cacophony is gone, replaced with a group of melancholy men who appear to have been drinking for some time. When Porky sees you enter he calls out to the others, "There we go lads, finally there'll be some justice! The bobbies might not care what happens to us, but Wiggins and his friends will." He comes over to us, ruddy faced due to inebriation and anger in equal measures, "Well, how can I help? You've got to catch this killer, you just have to."

"Irving?" asks Wiggins, "You knew him?"

"Irving?!" bellows Porky. "No not Irving! Rodney bloody Valentine! Don't tell me you're working on something else!"

"No, no, of course not," Wiggins says, "Or, that is to say, we are investigating both cases. But yes, Rodney. What can you tell us about him?"

"He was the kindest soul you'd meet in here," Porky says, choking back a sob, "Been stealing since he was a lad to help his pour mum. Came in here a couple days ago and told me that he'd found a big job, someone willing to pay lots for a particular envelop. Rodney said he'd be gone a few days trailing his mark but that after that there'd be a lot to celebrate. Good thing too. Rodney had worked up quite a debt payin' to keep his mum well. Who'll help them now?"

Wiggins puts his hand on Porky's shoulder to console him, "Can you think of any reason someone would kill him? Aside from people he's robbed?"

"Aside from the robbin', Rodney was the nicest bloke you could meet. Only one who might've hurt him is Bert Stevens, the thug what owns his debt. Bert's hard to find at home, but you can usually find him at one of the theaters, pretendin' to be an upstanding sort."

We leave the men to their stories and what sounds like not the first or last toast of the evening.

66 EC

The apothecary is closed and we gather from bystanders that the owner was carted off by the police sometime this morning. Sneaking in through the back, we find a small shop with an assortment of remedies and cure-alls, none that you'd be particularly comfortable ingesting. After some searching, Wiggins also finds a loose panel on the wall behind the register. Prying it open, you find a hidden set of shelves upon which rests an assortment of vials containing murky liquids, as well as a small silver ring engraved with, "Together, even when apart - HI." Putting the panel back in place, you leave.

South West

2 SW

"Well, there's nothing much happening in London, I'm sorry to say. At least, nothing worth commenting on. Fortunately, news from the continent has been particularly spicy of late. The wife of General Botella in Spain had been having an affair with a young noble from the countryside named Antonio Rivera and earlier this week the general caught the man in his home. Words were exchanged, and if rumors can be believed, bullets. The man escaped, but now the General's wife has gone missing! Perhaps she has rendezvoused with her young suitor and they are even now on the run from the General. How exciting!"

5 SW

You learn so much during your time at the library. So much, about so many things. It is an experience you cherish, and one you hope to repeat in the near future. But you do not learn who killed Henry Irving. Or why.

8 SW

You're shown into the Diogenes Club and meet with Mycroft in the back. You get the distinct sense that beneath his calm veneer he is extremely worried about other matters and is only barely managing to squeeze you into a particularly pressing schedule.

"I don't know what crusade my brother has set you on," he begins, "But let me stop you before you get too excited. This was a simple case of mistaken identities and the victim, as it turns out, is of no interest to myself or the Special Branch. The man who was killed was a simple merchant by the name of Henry Irving. We've turned his body over to Scotland Yard, so if you're intent on pursuing the matter further, I would recommend that you inquire at their usual facilities."

13 SW

We're shown into Lestrade's office and it's immediately apparent that he's in an even worse mood than when we spoke to him earlier. "Good day," says Wiggins.

"It is not," Lestrade responds matter-of-factly. "It's hard enough to do my job with Sherlock making a mess of things. Now his brother has to interfere as well? If it wasn't for that, we'd have this whole matter wrapped up by now, I can promise you that. We have a couple of suspects in mind - the woman Irving was meeting with and the ruffian that jumped on him when he fell. Sounds like the woman was a foreigner, and with the Special Branch involved chances are the murderer is either in custody somewhere else or escaped to somewhere we'll never find her. By god, someone's going to pay for this though. Murray thinks he was poisoned and we have some usual suspects in custody who deal in that sort of thing. No evidence yet, but my money is on Squire. He's usually involved in this sort of thing."

"What about the victim? Was he involved in anything suspicious?"

"No, nothing like that. As far as we can tell he didn't spend much time in London. We know his daughter well enough though. Emma Irving is what happens to a child with no father around.

She'll sweet-talk you well enough, but she's on a bad path if you ask me. Spends too much time in unsavory parts of town, making the wrong friends. We've brought her in for theft and pickpocketing a few times. With her father dead, I won't be surprised if we catch her for something worse in the next couple of years. Poor kid."

Before we leave, we inquire as to the death of Rodney Valentine. "What? Oh yes, that business. No, with the Holmes conspiring to make life difficult, I've had my hands quite full with this Irving business. I heard that a pickpocket was killed in an abandoned property, but, well, that's sometimes what happens when you're a pickpocket. I can't imagine there's much more to know."

22 SW

We find H.R. Murray bent over a beaker, apparently transfixed by its contents. "Mr. Murray," says Wiggins softly, resulting in the eccentric scientist leaping from his chair in surprise and turning on us.

"Hell Woggons! Don't sneak up on me like that!"

"Sorry. And it's Wiggins."

"Yes, yes, of course it is. I suppose you're here about the chap that came in through Special Branch? Not much to tell - he was poisoned. I have a few more tests to do, but I'm 96 percent certain it was cyanide, judging by the chemicals in his stomach. There was one other thing - a bit of black dye in his hair, although it looks like he'd washed most of it out recently."

We thank him and ask about the other death from last night, Mr. Valentine. He responds by retrieving a small, battered knife with dried blood caked along the blade. "We found this in a corner of the room the man died in, over at the old Twining storefront. Other than that, I can't tell you much. Meeks would most certainly know more in this case."

23 SW

We inquire at Milbank Prison about Rodney Valentine and while everyone we speak to agrees that we was a kind man, there is also widespread agreement that he was certain to return to his life of crime as soon as he was released. Many remember him speaking anxiously about his mother's health and how he would do anything in his power to get her the medicine she needed.

38 SW

We are shown to Ambassador Del Guerra's office by the head of his security, Salvador del Castillo, who has an immaculately groomed mustache and a slight limp that causes him to wince when he thinks you aren't paying attention. Hector cannot hide a gleam of self-satisfaction as he greets us, although he doesn't illuminate what has put him in such a good mood. "Hello gentlemen! How can I help you on this fine day?"

"Well," begins Wiggins, "We're looking into the murder of Henry Irving."

"A murder?!" he exclaims. "How terrible. Please, tell me how Spain can help our allies in this matter."

Wiggins is slightly taken aback by the man's enthusiasm. "Well sir, he was heard speaking spanish with a woman just before he died and the woman seems to have disappeared. Do you know her or know anything of Mr. Irving?"

"I do not! I can easily imagine how a British man might be enraptured by one of Spain's beautiful flowers but sadly, I cannot claim to know them all. I assure you, we will not impede your investigation, even if your suspect is Spanish. Best of luck in finding her!"

On our way out, a carriage arrives and produces a man dressed in the formal regalia of a spanish general. His brow is beaded with nervous sweat and he rubs his wedding ring. Your escort quickly greets him and sees him inside.

66 SW

The docks are a scene of chaos, but not the normal pandemonium we'd come to expect. Where normally strong-backed men ran to and fro carrying the cargo that was the lifeblood of London's economy, today mills a raucous crowd hurling insults at the poor policeman who had drawn the unfortunate lot of attempting to appease them. We are told that inside the dock's offices, the leaders of the strike and representatives of the government are hard at work coming to an agreement, but no one out here in the cold has high hopes for the situation being resolved soon.

77 SW

With a feline conundrum preventing us from maintaining a clear focus on the case at hand, we decide to pay a visit to the home of Ms. Jefferies. As we walk up to the somewhat dilapidated entrance, it's hard to miss the several saucers adorning the doorstep which all seem contain remnants of dried milk or cream. Wiggins knocks and a moment later the door opens to reveal a small woman with greying hair whose expression shifts from curiosity to a most alarming visage of rage. Before any of us can react, Ms. Jefferies has catapulted herself at Wiggins and the two of them tumble into the street, a maelstrom of fists and cursing. We spring into action and a few moments later have pulled the woman kicking and screaming away from a very confused Wiggins.

"Cat-thief!" Ms. Jefferies screams, trying to tear herself free from our grasp. "Filthy low-life cat-thief! You give them back!"

Wiggins pulls himself to his feet, coughing and holding his head. "Ma'am, I'm not-"

"Don't lie to me, boy!" she screams and then tries to turn to us, "I saw him! I waited last night to see where my cats was going and I saw him, sneaking up on poor Percival! He's one of my last ones! I wasn't going to let him put Percy in that bag of his! So I chased him down the street until the filthy man escaped into the sewers! The sewers!" She turns back to Wiggins, "Is that where you've taken them? Are they all right or have you eaten them, you wretch?"

Wiggins - his face bleeding and distraught - cannot seem to manage a response. Unwilling to subject him to any more abuse and uncomfortable with the small crowd that has formed around us, we push Ms. Jefferies back to her door and rejoin Wiggins as he makes a hasty exit. Asking him what that was about, he only replies, "I have no idea."

North West

11 NW

We arrive at the Princess Theater just as the show is getting out and as the crowd begins to disperse to whatever wonders the rest of the evening holds for them, we spot a man matching Bert Steven's description. He is a somewhat round man dressed immaculately, although we can clearly see that his suit does not quite fit and his shoes are in slight disrepair. As we approach him, a much younger and stronger man steps to block our way.

"That's quite all right David," Stevens says, peering at us from around his bodyguard, "I've been expecting a few questions since I saw poor Rodney's name in the newspaper this morning."

"Ah, good," says Wiggins, "Then perhaps you can tell us where you were last night when Rodney was killed?"

"Asleep, in bed," he replies, "Sadly there were no witnesses. But believe me when I tell you, there's no one more upset about Rodney's death than me. The man owed me 1,200 pounds – far more than I likely should have given him. But he weaves such a tearful story you see, about his sick mother. And I had every reason to think he would in fact pay me back, although he'd likely end up back in prison more than once during the process. Now..." he sighs and opens his arms in a gesture of helplessness, "I have no chance at recovering my losses. Please, if you do find his

killer let me know. They now owe me a debt and while I do not kill those who owe me debts, I do find ways of collecting."

18 NW

Nothing has been left for us.

42 NW

As we enter Sherlock's abode, he is studying an intricate mechanism with fascination and does not seem to notice us.

"Pardon us, Mr. Holmes," peeps Wiggins, "but we've hit a bit of a wall in the case."

"Oh?" asks Sherlock, still not looking up, "Have you considered it?"

"Considered what, Mr. Holmes?"

"The case, Wiggins. Have you considered the facts of the case?"

"Yes, of course Mr. Holmes, we've been doing just that all day."

"And you've found nothing that stands out to you? Nothing at all? Interesting." After a prolonged, awkward pause, he continues, "Well, then allow me to help. Consider, Wiggins, that this man, Mr. Irving arrived in London unexpectedly and refused to leave his house until the evening of his demise. It is obvious that he was scared and likely pursued. And if he was trapped in his own house it stands to reason that someone else in the immediate area might have seen who was doing the trapping."

We bid Holmes a good day, but he does not seem to notice.

South East

34 SE

The bartender confirms that Mr. Squire was indeed here from 6 PM until nearly midnight. And making quite a racket at that.

78 SE

Wiggins knocks on the door of a particularly run-down dwelling and shortly thereafter the door opens to reveal two extremely large, threatening men wielding clubs.

"Yea?" bellows the one on the left in an altogether unfriendly tone.

"We're here about Mr. Valentine's death," peeps Wiggins.

"Are you now?" asks the one on the right, rhythmically thumping his club into his open palm.

"And why might that be?" asks the one on the left, stepping forward slightly.

Wiggins holds up his hands to placate them, but they appear unappeased. "We're trying to bring his killer to justice. We were wondering if we might look for clues in his room."

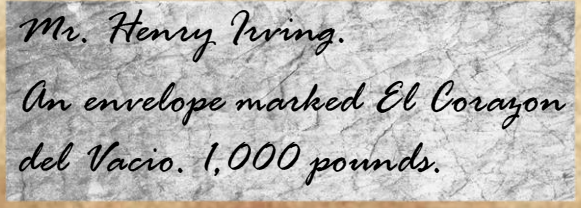
"No, I don't think so," says the one on the left.

"We don't think so at all," agrees the one on the right. "A man broke in here last night. Scared Rod's mum half to death. Walked straight up to Rod's room, took some things, and left."

"Thank you," says Wiggins. "We really do want to help. Can you tell us anything else about the man?"

They glance at each other and then the one on the left produces a crumpled note. The one on the right says, "Mrs. V didn't see him well, but it might be he's the one that gave Rodney this."

The note reads:



QUESTIONS

Part 1

1. Who killed Henry Irving?
2. Why?
3. What was stolen from Henry's body?
4. By whom?
5. Who killed Rodney Valentine?

Part 2

1. Who is Antonio Rivera?
2. Where have all the cats gone?
3. What is the name of Wiggins' twin brother?
4. Where is Isabelle Botella?

SOLUTION

We reconvene at 221 B Baker Street and find Holmes in the company of the two men who picked him up this morning. Notably absent is Lestrade, who we take it Sherlock has not seen fit to invite to this discussion.

Holmes turns towards us and inhales deeply, but before he can begin the shorter of his two escorts interrupts, “Mr. Holmes, please remember that this matter is classified. We should be as discreet as possible.”

Sherlock turns towards the man with an air of annoyance and disdain. “I will thank you not to interrupt me in my own home. And as to discretion, I trust that nothing I am about to say will come as any great surprise to our current audience. Furthermore, I will not speak inaccurately. I will not bear it.” Then, turning back to us, “Back to business, shall we?

“As I’m sure you surmised, Mr. Henry Irving was no merchant. He was in fact an agent of our own intelligence agencies, working for my brother and these fine men here. His sudden appearance, the black hair dye he carried with him, the coded message in the newspaper warning him that the Spanish were watching him, and the fact that the ship he arrived on did not have a record of him under the name Henry Irving are enough to surmise that he had been living a double life as the Spanish noble who recently fought his way out of a Spanish General’s mansion. What the newspapers characterize as a matter of simple adultery was anything but, as the obvious importance of the papers Mr. Irving carried with him from Spain makes apparent. Whatever was on those papers was-“ he pauses and glances at the gentlemen beside him, “-was obviously important. Important enough for the Spanish to kill for, but that was not the rout they took.”

The agents next to Sherlock seem surprised by this statement. He continues, “It is apparent that the Spanish had employed Rodney Valentine – a local thief – to steal the plans back before Irving could safely rendezvous with his confederates. Why would they then kill the man when their own thief was so close to accomplishing his task? They would not. But who else had motive to wish Mr. Irving dead?”

“The French, perhaps,” puts forth the taller of the men, “They also have some involvement in-“ he is interrupted by a jab from the shorter man and Sherlock flashes them a wry grin.

“Indeed, but you’re forgetting that Mr. Irving was not only a highly trained intelligence operative, but also a husband and father. And while the man have excelled in the role you prescribe to him, all evidence points to him as quite the failure in his more mundane life. His wife was miserable, but loyal to him, a fact that they’re daughter was attempting to change judging by Mr. Alexander’s account and the enticing message in the newspaper, almost certainly written by Emma. When Emma caught her father in an argument with a beautiful woman and then left to meet her at a pub, she decided it was time to remove the man from both their lives. She stole her mother’s ring and used it to purchase a vial of cyanide from Mr. Squire. She then went to the Staple where she occasionally works and used her position to slip the poison into her father’s drink unnoticed. When he collapsed, Rodney sprang into action and stole the envelop, but he was no killer.”

Turning to the government agents, Sherlock finishes his assessment. “And so, much to your dismay, your Spanish counterparts are not guilty of your man’s death. They are guilty of murder however, as a bloody knife and a limp paint a picture of an altercation between our thief and Ambassador del Guerra’s head of security. But Mr. Irving’s death was the result of his devotion to country outstripping his devotion to his family. Speaking of which, do neither of you gentlemen have anything better to do than keep an eye on me?”

HOLMES

Holmes solved the case after visiting 7 locations: The Staple, Henry Irving's, Thomas Alexander's, The West Indies Steamship Company, Scotland Yard, Squire & Sons, the Spanish Embassy

SCORE

Part 1

1. Who killed Henry Irving? Emma Irving (20 points)
2. Why? Being a terrible father and husband (20 points)
3. What was stolen from Henry's body? Secret Spanish blueprints (20 points)
4. By whom? Rodney Valentine (20 points)
5. Who killed Rodney Valentine? Salvador del Castillo (20 points)

Part 2

1. Who is Antonio Rivera? Henry Irving, in disguise (10 points)
2. Who is Mrs. Irving's suitor? Johnny Happ (10 points)
3. What is the name of Wiggins' twin brother? Edward (10 points)
4. Where is Isabelle Botella? The Spanish Embassy (10 points)



The Times

No 33 534 LONDON, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12th, 1890 Price: 3d.

BIRTHS

On the 5th inst., the wife of Neils Larsen, of a daughter.

On the 10th inst., at Ampfield House, Shooter's-hill-road, the wife of R. COOPER WILLIS, Q.C, of twin sons.

DEATHS

On the 11th of November, Henry Irving a well-regarded London merchant. A loyal husband and doting father, he will be missed.

On the 11th of November, Rodney Valentine a beloved son and friend to all who knew him.

PERSONAL,&c.

JH, please do forgive my coyness. Won't you visit again? – MI

EMMIT – This will not stand. Consider yourself warned.

CARRAIGE ACCIDENT in RED LION SQUARE – To the sir who assisted me in gathering my belongings after that dreadful affair, you have my thanks.

TAXIDERMIST – Big game or small. See Bilbo UNDERHILL, 48, Leonard's-terrace.

MYSTERY AT SEA

The steamship Tidecaller has returned to Plymouth two weeks later than scheduled, allaying fears that she had been lost to a storm. Relief has turned to fear and suspicion however, as the boat returned without her crew, save for Carter Hemmish, a ship's hand in the galley. So far Mr. Hemmish has been uncooperative, with sources wishing to remain anonymous describing him as, "Gibbering as though possessed."

ABROAD

GERMAN CONTRAPTIONS GAINING TRACTION

The horseless carriages first developed in Germany four years ago are becoming ever-more popular on the continent, with several hundred now produced. London carriage drivers are moving to block them from coming into the city, calling them foreign death traps that would endanger British citizens.

NO WORD FROM NEW SOUTH WHALES

Following an assassination attempt against Sir Charles Carrington, all communication into or out of New South Whales is being blocked without explanation. The crime was reportedly committed by aborigines and was unsuccessful, although neither can be confirmed at this time.

ENTERTAINMENT

The Princess Theater today begins its showing of the revolutionary new play – Twilight in Africa, an exhilarating retelling of Sir Tyrone Hood's adventures and conquests in the Dark Continent.

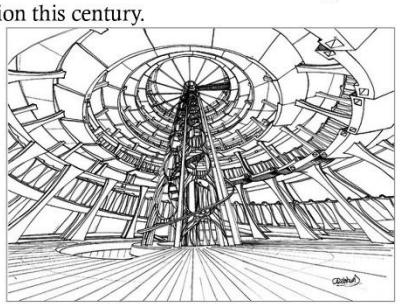
SITUATIONS

COOK-HOUSEKEEPER to a widow. 3 years, 3 months' reference. Inquire at 23 Sutton St

CONSTRUCTION - The firm of Marret&Sons is hiring as many able-bodied men as can be found to begin construction of the site for next year's Inventor's Symposium.

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW, TODAY!

All of Europe is in preparation for the first Inventor's Symposium, to be held in London in July of next year. Although the conference's organizers stress that it is an opportunity for all nations to come together in the spirit of progress, it is already mired by rumors of espionage and spycraft. Nevertheless, the fair promises to be one of the most marvelous showcases of technology and invention this century.



RUSSIAN ENGINEERS DIE IN ACCIDENT

Three Russian engineers died on November 8th in Sevastopol. Reports indicate that they were assigned to a project attempting to adapt machinery used in the mining of iron to underwater conditions. The future of this laudable effort is now left uncertain as the project head and two of his assistants were killed in an explosion at the research facility.

BENEFITT TOMORROW – At the Conservatory for the Royal Society of Horticulture. A sale of flower-bearing plants and seeds. Open to the public.

Sir William Hancock has made clear his intention to track down and bring to justice an unknown number of individuals who have in recent days carried out a subtle campaign of defamation against him. The London gentleman tells the Times that he has recently heard from friends and acquaintances a number of troubling stories and rumors linking him to several unsavory businesses in the city and surrounding areas, none of which he has any official connection to. Sir Hancock wishes the people of London to be aware that his character is under assault by ninnies and hoodlums who seek to undermine his good name, although he does not yet know what their purpose is.

The Blue Ball has been closed following the discovery of spoiled meat on the premises. The owners assure the public that the meat was not served and that they will open again as soon as they are permitted.

CLOSE TO HOME

Dock workers at the commercial docks are on strike following the death of a foreman during the routine offloading of a freighter last week. They are demanding additional workers and time to better maintain the equipment used in in day to day work.

Dear sirs, I beseech you to continue carrying to the public news of a danger that they are woefully unprepared for. Although we are now entering a brisk winter, I have news that a heat wave is being carried up from the Spanish plains - one that may endanger the very lives of our citizens. To be safe, I urge them to cancel whatever plans they may have and to stay inside, out of sight of the searing sun until this unseasonable danger passes.

Ms. Ann Jefferies reports that at this time last year, at any time of day it was possible to see anywhere from 5 to 10 cats from her doorstep. At present, she reports, that she might only see one or two "if [she's] lucky." Ms. Jefferies offers a reward of five pounds to anyone who can provide information on where the cats have gone.

Organizers of a rally urging Irish independence have fled London after what supporters have called clear evidence that Scotland Yard was intending to break up the planned rally with lethal force. Scotland Yard has responded with a statement that they were unaware of a planned rally and that this latest stunt is an attempt to drum up sympathy for a movement run by baboons and vagrants.

LATEST INTELLIGENCE
(From our Correspondents)

FRANCE AND ITALY
Paris, November 8

Deterioration of ties between Paris and Rome following Italy's strengthened relations with Germany have many wondering how wide the gulf between them can get. Italy has threatened to bar famed inventor Mario Maretzi from attending the Inventor's Symposium in London, accusing France of using the event as a staging ground for espionage.

SCANDAL IN SPAIN
Madrid, November 9

The international community is abuzz with rumors that General Javier Botella has caught his wife Isabelle dallying with a young suitor from the countryside. Not only does this scandalous affair contain reports of gunfire, but the General has apparently used his authority to mobilize the military to look for the interloper. More details as we learn them.

GREEK INTERFERENCE
Cyprus, November 10

Colonial officials in Cyprus are watching an ongoing Greek cultural fair carefully. "We support our people's ability to honor and celebrate their heritage," says Arthur Mann, an official in the governor's office. "However, these events are a dangerous opportunity for foreign agents to sow discord. We are monitoring them carefully to ensure that spies and interlopers do not force us to restrict our people's freedoms."