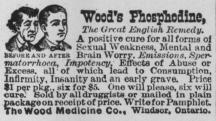
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# TME RETURN OF SMERLOCK MOLMES ...

BY A. CONAN DOYLE

engaged an agent from a private de-

tective firm, who entered my husband's

house as a secretary. It was your sec-

ond secretary, Sergius-the one who

left you so hurriedly. He found that

papers were kept in the cupboard, and

he got an impression of the key. He

would not go further. He furnished

me with a plan of the house, and he

told me that in the forenoon the study

was always empty, as the secretary

was employed up here. So at last I

took my courage in both hands, and I

came down to get the papers for my-

self. I succeeded, but at what a cost!

was locking the cupboard when the

young man seized me. I had seen him

already that morning. He had met me

on the road, and I had asked him to

tell me where Professor Coram lived,

not knowing that he was in his em-

"Exactly! Exactly!" said Holmes.

"The secretary came back and told his

employer of the woman he had met.

my duty, and"-

pince-nez. But for the fortunate chance

of the dying man having seized these

I am not sure that we could ever have

reached our solution. It was clear to

me, from the strength of the glasses,

that the wearer must have been very

and in that case it was evident that

she must have entered the professor's

supposition, and I examined the room

narrowly for anything in the shape of a hiding place. The carpet seemed con-

tinuous and firmly nailed, so I dismiss-

ed the idea of a trapdoor. There might

well be a recess behind the books. As

you are aware, such devices are com-

mon in old libraries. I observed that

books were piled on the floor at all

other points, but that one bookcase

was left clear. This, then, might be

the door. I could see no marks to

guide me, but the carpet was of a

dun color, which lends itself very well

to examination. I therefore smoked a

great number of those excellent ciga-

rettes, and I dropped the ash all over the space in front of the suspected

bookcase. It was a simple trick, but

exceedingly effective. I then went

downstairs, and I ascertained in your

presence, Watson, without your per-

ceiving the drift of my remarks, that

Professor Coram's consumption of food

had increased-as one would expect

when he is supplying a second person.

We then ascended to the room again,

when, by upsetting the cigarette box, I

obtained a very excellent view of the

"I had just taken the papers and

"Yes, sir, I am your prisoner," she months of searching I discovered where said. "From where I stood I could hear | he was. I knew that he still had the everything, and I know that you have | diary, for when I was in Siberia I had learned the truth. I confess it all. It | a letter from him once reproaching me was I who killed the young man. But and quoting some passages from its you are right-you who say it was an pages. Yet I was sure that, with his accident. I did not even know that it i revengeful nature, he would never give was a knife which I held in my hand, | it to me of his own free will. I must for in my despair I snatched anything get it for myself. With this object I from the table and struck at him to make him let me go. It is the truth

"Madam," said Holmes, "I am sure that it is the truth. I fear that you are far from well." She had turned a dreadful color, the more ghastly under the dark dust streaks upon her face. She seated her-

self on the side of the bed; then she re-"I have only a little time here," she said, "but I would have you to know the whole truth. I am this man's wife. He is not an Englishman. He is a Russian. His name I will not tell." For the first time the old man stirred.

"God bless you, Anna!" he cried. "God She cast a look of the deepest disdain in his direction. "Why should you cling so hard to that wretched life of yours, Sergius?" said she. "It has done harm to many and good to none, not even yourself. However, it is not for me to cause the frail thread to be snapped before God's time. I have enough alady upon my soul since I crossed the threshold of this cursed house. But I must speak or I shall be too late.

"I have said, gentlemen, that I am this man's wife. He was fifty and I a foolish girl of twenty when we married. It was in a city of Russia, a university-I will not name the place." "God bless you, Anna!" murmured

the old man again. "We were reformers, revolutionists, nihilists, you understand-he and I and many more. Then there came a time of trouble. A police officer was killed, many were arrested, evidence was wanted, and in order to save his own life and earn a great reward my husband betrayed his own wife and his ompanions. Yes, we were all arrested upon his confession. Some of us found our way to the gallows and some to Siberia. I was among these last, but my erm was not for life. My husband Se Langerife Langerife changerife chengerife chengerife de chengerife chengerife chengerife de came to England with his ill gotten gains and has lived in quiet ever since, knowing well that if the Brotherhood knew where he was not a week would pass before justice would be done." The old man reached out a trembling hand and helped himself to a cigarette. "I am in your hands, Anna," said he.

"You were always good to me." "I have not yet told you the height of his villainy," said she. "Among our comrades of the order there was one who was the friend of my heart. He was noble, unselfish, loving-all that my husband was not. He hated violence. We were all guilty, if that is guilt, but he was not. He wrote forever dissuading us from such a course. These letters would have saved him. So would my diary, in which from day to day I had entered, both my feelings toward him and the view which each of us had taken. My husband found and kept both diary and letters. He hid them, and he tried hard to swear away the young man's life. In this he failed, but Alexis was sent a convict to Siberia, where now at this moment he works in a salt mine. Think of that, you villain, you villain-now, now, at this very moment, Alexis, a man whose name you are not worthy to

speak, works and lives like a slave. and yet I have your life in my hands, and I let you go!' "You were always a noble woman, Anna," said the old man, puffing at his

She had risen, but she fell back again with a little cry of pain. "I must finish," she said. "When my term was over I set myself to get the diary and letters which, if sent to the Russian government, would procure my friend's release. I knew that my

husband had come to England. After

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come out from her retreat. Well, Hopkins, here we are at Charing Cross, and I congratulate you on having brought your case to a successful conclusion. You are going to headquarters, no doubt. I think, Watson, you and I will drive together to the Russian em-

Unanswerable. Maiden Aunt-Caroline, you don't know how to train children. I've been noticing how you deal with Johnny. Nine out of every ten injunctions you lay upon him are "don'ts." Married Niece-Why, Aunt Abigail, nine of the Ten Commandments are

#### 'don'ts!"-Chicago Tribune. The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter

No. 11 of the Series

(Copyright, 1,eq4, by A. Conan Doyle and Collier's Weekly.) E were fairly accustomed to receive weird grams recollection of one which reached us on a gloomy February morning, some seven or eight years ago, and gave Mr. Sherlock Holmes a puzzled quarter of an hour. It was addressed to him and

Right wing three-quarter missing, indispensable tomorrow. OVERTON. "Strand postmark and dispatched 10:36," said Holmes, reading it over and over. "Mr. Overton was evidently considerably excited when he sent it and somewhat incoherent in consequence. Well, well, he will be here, I dare say, by the time I have looked through the Times, and then we shall know all about it. Even the most insig-

Then in his last breath he tried to send these stagnant days." whom he had just discussed with him." "You must let me speak," said the with us, and I had learned to dread woman in an imperative voice, and such periods of inaction, for I knew her face contracted as if in pain. "When he had fallen I rushed from the by experience that my companion's brain was so abnormally active that it room, chose the wrong door and found was dangerous to leave it without mamyself in my husband's room. He spoke of giving me up. I showed him that if he did so his life was in my terial upon which to work. For years I had gradually weaned him from that drug mania which had threatened hands. If he gave me to the law, I once to check his remarkable career. could give him to the Brotherhood. It Now I knew that under ordinary conwas not that I wished to live for my own sake, but it was that I desired ditions he no longer craved for this to accomplish my purpose. He knew artificial stimulus, but I was well that I would do what I said-that his aware that the fiend was not dead. but sleeping, and I have known that own fate was involved in mine. For that reason, and for no other, he shieldthe sleep was a light one and the waking near when in periods of idleness ed me. He thrust me into that dark I have seen the drawn look upon hiding place-a relic of old days, Holmes' ascetic face and the brooding known only to himself. He took his of his deep set and inscrutable eyes. meals in his own room, and so was able to give me part of his food. It Therefore I blessed this Mr. Overton. whoever he might be, since he had was agreed that when the police left come with his enigmatic message to the house I should slip away by night break that dangerous calm which rative and come back no more. But in some way you have read our plans." She brought more peril to my friend than tore from the bosom of her dress a all the storms of his tempestuous life. As we had expected, the telegram small packet. "These are my last words," said she. "Here is the packet was soon followed by its sender, and which will save Alexis. I confide it to the card of Mr. Cyril Overton, Trinity your honor and to your love of justice. college, Cambridge, announced the ar-Take it! You will deliver it at the rival of an enormous young man, sixteen stone of solid bone and muscle, Russian embassy. Now, I have done who spanned the doorway with his "Stop her!" cried Holmes. He had broad shoulders and looked from one bounded across the room and had of us to the other with a comely face

wrenched a small vial from her hand. which was haggard with anxiety. "Too late!" she said, sinking back on the bed. "Too late! I took the poison My companion bowed. before I left my hiding place. My "T've been down to Scotland Yard, head swims! I am going! I charge Mr. Holmes. I saw Inspector Stanley you, sir, to remember the packet." Hopkins. He advised me to come to "A simple case, and yet in some you. He said the case, so far as he ways an instructive one," Holmes recould see, was more in your line than marked as we traveled back to town. in that of the regular police." "It hinged from the outset upon the

"Pray sit down and tell me what is "It's awful, Mr. Holmes. Simply awful! I wonder my hair isn't gray. Godfrey Staunton-you've heard of him, of course? He's simply the hinge that the whole team turns on. I'd blind and helpless when deprived of rather spare two from the pack and them. When you asked me to believe have Godfrey for my three-quarter that she walked along a narrow strip line. Whether it's passing or tackling of grass without once making a false or dribbling there's no one to touch step I remarked, as you may remem- him, and, ...en, he's got the head and ber, that it was a noteworthy perform- can hold us all together. What am I ance. In my mind I set it down as an to do? That's what I ask you, Mr. impossible performance save in the un- Holmes. There's Moorhouse, first reserve, but he is trained as a half, and of glasses. I was forced, therefore, to he always edges right in on to the seriously consider the hypothesis that scrum instead of keeping out on the she had remained within the house. On | touch line. He's a fine place kick, it's perceiving the similarity of the two true, but then he has no judgment, and corridors it became clear that she might he can't sprint for nuts. Why, Morvery easily have made such a mistake, ton or Johnson, the Oxford fliers, could romp round him. Stevenson is fast enough, but he couldn't drop from room. I was keenly on the alert, therefore, for whatever would bear out this quarter who can't either punt or drop isn't worth a place for pace alone. No, Mr. Holmes, we are done unless you can help me to find Godfrey Staunton." My friend had listened with amused

surprise to this long speech, which was poured forth with extraordinary vigor and earnestness, every point being driven home by the slapping of a brawny hand upon the speaker's knee. When our visitor was silent Holmes stretched out his hand and took down letter "S" of his commonplace book. For once he dug in vain into that mine

of varied information. "There is Arthur H. Staunton, the rising young forger," said he, "and there was Henry Staunton, whom I helped to hang, but Godfrey Staunton is a new name to me.' It was our visitor's turn to look sur-

"Why, Mr. Holmes, I thought you knew things," said he. "I suppose then, if you have never heard of Godfrey Staunton, you don't know Cyril verton either?" Holmes shook his head good humor-

"Great Scott!" cried the athlete. from the traces upon the cigarette ash that the prisoner had in our absence "Why, I was first reserve for England against Wales, and I've skippered

the varsity all this year. But that's nothing! I sidn't think there was a soul in England who didn't know Godfrey Staunton, the crack three-quarter, Cambridge, Blackheath and five internationals. Good Lord, Mr. Holmes, where have you lived?"

naive astonishment. "You live in a different world from me, Mr. Overton-a sweeter and healthler one. My ramifications stretch out into many sections of society, but never, I am happy to say, into amateur sport, which is the best and soundest thing in England. However, your unexpected visit this morning shows me that even in that world of fresh air and fair play there may be work for me to do. So now, my good sir, I beg you to sit down and tell me, slowly and quietly, exactly what it is that has occurred and how you desire that I should help you." Young Overton's face assumed the bothered look of a man who is more accustomed to using his muscles than his wits, but by degrees, with many repetitions and obscurities which I may omit from his narrative, he laid

Holmes laughed at the young giant's

his strange story before us. "It's this way, Mr. Holmes. As I have said, I am the skipper of the Rugger team of Cambridge varsity, and Godfrey Staunton is my best man. Tomorrow we play Oxford. Yesterday we all came up, and we settled at Bentley's private hotel. At 10 o'clock I went round and saw that all the fellows had gone to roost, for I believe in strict training and plenty of sleep to keep a team fit. I had a word or two with Godfrey before he turned in. He seemed to me to be pale and bothered. I asked him what was the matter. He said he was all right-just a touch of headache. I bade him good night and left him. Half an hour later, the porter tells me, a rough looking man with a beard called with a note for Godfrey. He had not gone to bed, and the note was taken to his room. Godfrey read it and fell back in a chair as if he had been pole axed. The porter was so scared that he was going to fetch me, nificant problem would be welcome in | but Godfrey stopped him, had a drink of water and pulled himself together. Then he went downstairs, said a few words to the man who was waiting in the hall, and the two of them went off together. The last that the porter saw of them they were almost running down the street in the direction of the Strand. This morning Godfrev's room was empty, his bed had never been slept in, and his things were all just as I had seen them the hight before. He had gone off at a moment's notice with this stranger, and no word has come from him since. I don't believe he will ever come back. He was a sportsman, was Godfrey, down to his marrow, and

> good, and we should never see him Sherlock Holmes listened with the deepest attention to this singular nar-

he wouldn't have stopped his training

and let in his skipper if it were not for

some cause that was too strong for

him. No: I feel as if he were gone for

"What did you do?" he asked. "I wired to Cambridge to learn if anything had been heard of him there. I have had an answer. No one has seen him."

"Could he have got back to Cambridge? "Yes: there is a late train-quarter past 11."

"But, so far as you can ascertain, he did not take it?" "No; he has not been seen." "What did you do next?"

"I wired to Lord Mount-James." "Why to Lord Mount-James?" "Godfrey is an orphan, and Lord Mount-James is his nearest relativehis uncle, I believe."

"Indeed. This throws new light upon the matter. Lord Mount-James is one of the richest men in England." "So I've heard Godfrey say." "And your friend was closely re-

lated?"
"Yes; he was his heir, and the old boy is nearly eighty-cram full of gout too. They say he could chalk his billiard cue with his knuckles. He never allowed Godfrey a shilling in his life, for he is an absolute miser, but it will all come to him right enough.' "Have you heard from Lord Mount

To be continued

James?"

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