

With the aid of a magnifying glass, it is possible to see that on July 7th, 1930, the author Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle died at the age of 71. As this was over 70 years ago, his literary work is no longer copyrighted and can be plagiarised to the Bahamas and back. Conan Doyle suffered a heart attack and there was no mystery surrounding the death, unlike most deaths encountered by his greatest creation, Sherlock Holmes.

The character of Holmes has always been depicted as a genius of criminology and a crime-fighter extraordinaire. Conan Doyle published four novels and fifty-six short stories featuring the detective, including one in which Holmes allegedly died. The detective obviously faked his death, so hence could go on to solve many more crimes and make a lot more money for his author. Despite the occasional wads of cash, Conan Doyle did not like writing about the detective for he thought it kept him from more sensible writings. I know just how he felt – I yearn to do more sensible writings but this tripe keeps coming out instead.

In memory of the author's death we will now reveal the lost story of Sherlock Holmes, never before seen in print except by people with eyes.

Sherlock Holmes and The Toilet Paper Caper.

I'm sure I do not need to begin with introductions, so I will. My name is Dr John Watson, often mistaken for John Motson and occasionally for Joan Jetson on weekends. I work with my good friend, Sherlock Holmes and have written many stories about his adventures.

Until now, I have been forced to write my tales under duress, which is always one step up from being under a dress. For that reason I have never been able to tell the whole truth about Holmes and his cases, but I do not mind as it seems someone called Martha Colon Doiley has been taking the credit and the money for the tales of Holmes I have produced. Actually I am miffed about the money situation.

I would now like to take full credit for this true story of the one case Holmes could not solve. The case I have called The Toilet Paper Caper.

Everyone has heard of the Baskerville case, when Holmes was said to have uncovered the mystery of the demon dog plaguing the Baskerville family. There was a lot of crap going on in that case. I stood in it at least three times and Holmes slipped on some. When I recounted that tale in my writing, I was told by Holmes to exaggerate the scale of the hound – it was really a Jack Russell.

Anyway, that has nothing to do with the Toilet Paper Caper, unless you take into account that I used quite a bit to rub my shoes clean.

The Toilet Paper Caper began not long after the Baskerville case, which was not long after I started working with Holmes.

On the day it began I sat in his study while he stood on a chair and played the violin.

"Why don't you sit down, Holmes?" I asked him.

"It is a contradiction for one to sit in a study, Watson," he replied as he fiddled.

"You burnt your arse on the radiator again, didn't you?" I asked.

Holmes stopped fiddling and began playing the violin. This was his way of saying yes without actually saying it. He hated it when I had deductions of my own – especially as they were right on more occasions than his.

"Have you noticed, Watson, that there is a severe lack of toilet paper in this house?"

"I can't say I have, Holmes. When did you first notice it?"

"Not long after making your acquaintance, which leads me to one conclusion."

I held my breath while I waited. It struggled in my grip but I hung on until Holmes spoke again.

"I conclude that we have a thief among us."

"There are only two of use here," I pointed out.

"Do not be fooled," Holmes countered. "There are people everywhere."

He jumped across his counter and poked the curtain with his violin bow. The curtain giggled inanely. Holmes pulled back the curtain to reveal a man wearing clown make-up and holding a pack of cards.

"Watson, escort this joker off the premises!"

I did as requested, and when I returned four more lurkers were awaiting an escort. I gave them a phone book and told them to find one themselves.

"Watson!" Holmes shrieked when I returned to my seat. "I have it!"

"Well don't give it to me. I just got rid of it last week and my nose is still tingling."

"It was my arch-nemesis who stole the toilet paper; Professor Moriarty, the Napoleon of Crime."

I found it funny that Holmes always gave the Professor that title. I always thought of him as more of a Half-Nelson. "How have you concluded this, Holmes?"

"I fear he is trying to disable me from my crime-fighting by stranding me in a moment of weakness."

"I thought you had sorted your bladder problem," I said.

To avoid answering, Holmes resumed playing his violin. I made a note to hide it from him at the earliest opportunity. He continued playing for some time. I tried to sleep until he finished but he kept me awake by subtly poking me in the eye with his bow.

Six days later Holmes finally put down his violin. It had been poorly for some time and it was the kindest thing to do – it always sounded in pain when Holmes played it.

I excused myself to use the bathroom. I returned ten minutes later with a piece of toilet roll stuck to my shoe. Holmes jumped on it straight away. He missed and landed on my foot.

"This is a clue, Watson. Where did you find it?"

"On my shoe."

"See, we are making progress. I am almost ready to apprehend the culprit."

I began biting my nails. It was the anticipation that got to me.

The door bell rang. I crapped my pants and had to excuse myself again. When I returned, Holmes was standing in the middle of the study with a tall policeman, a short tramp and a greasy-haired shop assistant from Tesco.

"Ah, Watson." Holmes greeted me. "I am about to solve our toilet paper theft. What is that on your head?"

I reached up and plucked a sheet of toilet paper out of my hair.

"Ah!" Holmes exclaimed. "The final clue. Now I will begin my deduction!"

"You will recall, Watson, that I said my detection of our toilet paper crisis arose shortly after making your acquaintance. PC Plump here will remember a discussion I had telling him that I had noticed many lurkers in my house and believed they would be able to spy on the toilet for me in order to catch the culprit. Tommy the Tramp was the lurker who watched the toilet for me from inside the bowl."

"So that's what the smell is," I said.

"Sorry, guv," said Tommy, dripping on the carpet. "I did help solve this case though...I saw the culprit through the water."

"Finally," Holmes announced, getting to the end of his build up, "I visited Tesco to buy new toilet rolls only this morning, which can be confirmed by this bubblegum-chewing, greasy-haired shop assistant, yet now there is not a scrap left in the house! Watson, you have twice walked into this room with pieces of paper stuck to your body and furthermore it is following your frequent visits to the lavatory that most of the paper seems to disappear.

"Therefore, I have one conclusion to make."

The room waited in silence. I began to sweat.

Holmes held up his hand. "The butler did it!"

Fourteen lurkers groaned from behind the sofa, curtains, rug, mirror and wallpaper. Tommy the Tramp swore through a mouthful of toilet water. I breathed a sigh of relief and blew Holmes' deerstalker off his head.

"Holmes," I said. "We don't have a butler."

The doorbell rang. Holmes bounded to the door and returned with a tall thin man.

"Watson, let me introduce our new butler. PC Plump, take him away."

The butler was led from the room, followed by the shop assistant, Tommy the Tramp and fourteen lurkers.

I sat in a chair and Holmes resumed playing his violin. Holmes was satisfied that justice had been done and he had once again cracked the crime.

Unfortunately, Holmes never did work out the true culprit. I'm sure you haven't either. I must admit that I was partly responsible, but not in the way you may think. You see I helped protect the identity of the toilet paper thief – The Hound of The Baskervilles.

Despite what I wrote on that case, the hound was not killed by Holmes. It is known only to Holmes and I that he is a terrible shot. The hound, all twelve Jack Russelly inches of him, took quite affectionately to Holmes' leg. Holmes attempted to shoot him, but only succeeded in shooting himself in the foot, which is why he carried a cane for many subsequent cases.

I took pity on the little pooch and decided to keep him as a pet without telling Holmes. The only thing I had not been aware of was the Hound's love of toilet roll. I often found him eating the paper fresh from the roll and I usually ended up covered in torn scraps of it trying to pull him away. Of course Holmes never knew this.

So there is my true story of the great detective of Baker Street foiled by a dog.

Now, if only I could work out where the smell is coming from all would be well. Only the Hound and I live here which means there is only one logical conclusion for me to make – the butler did it.