

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2017-5-7)

A toast to Professional Musicians

by Alexander Katz

before a meeting of the Priory Scholars of NYC at The Churchill Tavern on May 6, 2017

(a meeting involving close study of "The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist")

Watson differentiates between the amateur and the professional. Holmes deduces almost immediately that Violet Smith is a musician, and we learn that she is a pianist. Her father, who has died, was a theatre conductor.

Holmes takes an interest in Violet Smith, especially when she informs him that she is a professional: she is giving music lessons, and sometimes accompanies Mr. Carruthers at night.

The canon provides examples of amateur musicians: we meet a garrotter, a blackmailing spy, and a burglarious murderer.

Because Violet Smith and her father are classified as professional musicians, we can surmise that they are the victims. We also know that they were destitute, as it is Uncle Ralph who has money.

So here's to professional musicians: destitute, victims of an oppressive system, whose only way to get ahead is to kill, blackmail, or burglarize.