

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2018-3-12)

Mary Morstan Watson
Crew of the Barque Lone Star
February 4, 2018
Karen Olson

Thank you for the program and calendar you sent. I have put them in my Sherlock Holmes scrap book. I attach a toast to Mary Morstan Watson which I recently delivered as a reading at a meeting of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star. It references all sixty stories, in order. I hope you get a few chuckles from it. Best wishes. Karen Olson

I have here the text of a letter from Mary Morstan Watson to Her husband, Dr. John Watson, reportedly obtained by Arthur Conan Doyle using the process of Automatic Writing at a recent seance. I will fully examine this document, searching for clues to determine its authenticity and urge you to do the same, but please maintain an open mind. Karen Olson

“My Dearest John,

Sitting in my study in scarlet pajamas, I watched the evening news while authorities search for any sign of four German men who have been creating quite a scandal. In Bohemia, the red-headed league with other radicals in a case of identity politics that threatens the peace of tranquil Boscombe Valley. Mystery surrounds these four men and an additional man, bringing total suspects to five. Orange pips marked locations on a map with links to the men.

With a twisted lip of one encountering a bad smell, the newscaster on the next channel said, out of the blue, “Carbuncle is not just a foot ailment but a portion of skin that has become speckled.” Band your foot too tightly and this is what you can expect. The TV crew tried to get involved in the discussion but seemed too much under the production engineer’s thumb to make any argument sound noble. Bachelor Buttons filled a vase on the set and provided a backdrop for a large plaster foot. Disgusting!

Then I switched to the Weather Channel where Beryl Coronet, the mayor’s wife, was threatening to call a copper. Beeches swayed in the wind. The falling snow on the trees appeared as a shining silver blaze of moonlight just like street lamps.

I turned off the TV and looked for a cardboard box in which to store my new sweater---- yellow. “Face it,” I told myself. “The black one is more slenderizing, but the color looks good on me.”

Tomorrow I have a meeting at my stockbroker’s. Clerk and boss alike will court me and my money with honeyed whispers about my even wealthier cousin, Gloria---Scott free at last after escaping to her warm Aegean paradise with her cat, Musgrave. Ritual for her demands a six-month sabbatical leading to a month of partying at Reigate. Squires of all ages and nationalities will flock around her. Some have the most honorable of intentions but others are just crooked. Man, I wish I could live in her island villa, not as a visitor but as the resident! Patient as my cousin is, she is always drawn to the Greek. Interpreter and linguist, she makes quite a stir at her office and at the beach when she wears a bikini which barely covers her naval. Treaty oaks cannot match the legend of my cousin when she announces that her emphatic “No” is final. Problem after problem will beset the amorous suitor if he acts like a hound. Of the Baskervilles and other neighbors, no one word is spoken about Gloria’s carryings on.

I must go to bed soon. I am running on empty. House chores can wait until tomorrow and be dealt with by the new butler, Norwood. Builder and plumber can all come dancing. Men in baseball caps

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2018-3-12)

with repair companies never arrive in solitary. Cyclist, van driver, and who knows who else will descend on our otherwise happy home. Unlike the Priory school, they want high wages rather than donations to keep them in the black. Peter, the banker is better than I at dealing with their monetary demands.

Though it is bedtime, I just got a call from my secretary, Charles. Augustus Milverton and company want to meet tomorrow evening at a French restaurant at six. Napoleons and creme brule are on the menu and help me decide to go even though I ought to stay home and wait for the police to call. Your intern program has hit a snag. Three students have been questioned about the theft of my golden pince-nez, which you remember was a gift from my grandmother, and was reported missing three-quarter of an hour after the students came to their jobs last week. First: The students all had duties that brought them near the house--- Joe, tending the stable, Sue, the kitchen, and Abbey, grange. Second: Stain was spilled into the wisteria. "Lodge a complaint about that, too" said the police. But I think that was just an unrelated accident. Third: Your dog, Lady, has run away and, thus, has not been on guard duty. Sorry, my sweet.

According to the contractor, Bruce-Partington, plans are proceeding nicely for our home renovation even though the details are the devil's. "Foot the bill, act gracious, and keep the budget out of the red. Circle the wagons. Don't worry about the disappearance of Lady", Frances Carfax, my gardening friend told me. I guess she's right and I need her help to keep the flowers from dying. Detective friend, Sherlock Holmes might be useful in investigating this valley of fear and loathing in a case that could, before retirement, be his last. "Bow" and "scrape" have become my middle names since this remodeling began.

I want something dramatic for the patio, like maybe Mazarin stone, but the mason, Thor Neilson, is slow and very expensive. That's the problem of Thor. Bridge money and speed and we can stop the cost over-runs from creeping. Man, I wish I were dealing with the old workmen in Sussex! Vampire and zombie cannot bring back the skills of the craftsmen of the past though.

I simply must get to bed and not go on writing until three. Garridebs is having a sale on home decorating picture books, my darling, and they could help me make up my mind about the patio by being simple but illustrious. Client and contractor meet again Friday at three. Gables, gutters and roofing will be discussed.

Saturday, I am going to the beach, and I'll use enough sun screen that I won't get blanched. "Soldier on" is my new motto.

Before your return, I promise a visit to the hair salon. My pate is starting to look like a lion's mane since my favorite hairdresser retired. Colourman also left for another salon that specializes in dye and bleach, leaving me to hide at home or go out in public veiled.

Lodger at Shoscombe??? Old place is being turned into an apiary, leased by you-know-who.... I thought you'd enjoy having him nearby. Must, must retire to the boudoir. See you soon.

Your loving wife,

Mary"

I propose a toast to Mary Morstan Watson, long-suffering wife of Dr. John Watson and friend to Sherlock Holmes.

To Mary.....