

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2020-10-31)

A Toast to Black Peter

The Sons of the Copper Beeches – 30 October 2020

Zoom

Peter E. Blau

“Villains always are the best roles,” Gene Hackman said in an interview published in the Washington Post in 1996, adding that “it’s the best kind of acting.” The headline on the story was “The Scoundrel King” and it went on to say that Hackman “is a man who is frightening even when he doesn’t intend to be. And is very frightening when he does.”

Villains are important to any story that has a hero, of course. It’s not enough to have an opponent who’s merely a criminal, or just some sort of bad guy. Conan Doyle created some splendid villains, including (of course) the master criminal James Moriarty, and the thoroughly evil blackmailer Charles Augustus Milverton, but neither of them is my favorite.

I must confess that it is not in honor of the fall meeting of the Sons, but rather because of the coronavirus quarantine, that I am sporting a black (well, perhaps not so black) beard. I also have a harpoon on the wall in my library, and a bottle of rum handy.

So: here’s my toast to my favorite villain, my namesake in the Baker Street Irregulars . . .
Black Peter.

Copyright 2020 Peter E. Blau