

HOLMES

(Enter WATSON)

Ah, Watson, my dear fellow.

WATSON

How are you, Holmes?

HOLMES

Perfectly delighted to see you, my dear fellow, perfectly delighted. Wedlock suits you, Watson. You have put on seven and one-half pounds since I saw you.

WATSON

Seven pounds actually.

HOLMES

Indeed I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy. But I also infer that you are in danger of losing it again if your wife remains away from home much longer.

WATSON

Indeed she returns tomorrow from a little visit. But how do you know?

HOLMES

How did I know? I observed it. How do I know that you have opened a consulting room and resumed the practice of medicine without letting me hear a word about it? How do I know that you've been getting your feet very wet lately, that you have engaged a most clumsy and careless servant girl—and that you've moved your dressing table to the other side of your room?

WATSON

My dear Holmes, if you lived a few centuries ago, they would have burned you alive.

HOLMES

Whereas you, my dear Doctor, would be as safe as house in any century you chose. Lucky man.

WATSON

Tell me, how did you know all that?

HOLMES

It is simplicity itself. There are scratches and parallel cuts on your right boot, there where the firelight strikes it. Somebody scraped away crusted mud and did it badly. There's your wet feet and careless servant girl all on one foot. Your face is badly shaved on your right side—you always used to be badly shaved on your left side—you couldn't very well move your window—you must have moved your dressing table.

WATSON

By Jove, yes! But my medical practice—I fail to see how you worked that out.

HOLMES

My dear Watson, if a gentleman walks into my room reeking of iodoform, and with a black mark of nitrate of silver on the inner side of his right forefinger, the characteristic tiny bulge

Holmes (Cont.)

in his top hat where he normally secrets his stethoscope, I must be dull indeed if I do not pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession.

WATSON

Ha! Ha! Of course. But how the deuce did you know my wife was away?

HOLMES

Where the deuce is your second waistcoat button, and what the deuce is yesterday's carnation doing in today's lapel? This is elementary! Child's play of deduction.

WATSON

Really! This is very interesting.

HOLMES

Ah—but my dear Doctor, the real interest will come when the professor begins to realize his position—which he cannot fail to do shortly. By ten o'clock tomorrow night the time will be ripe for the arrests. Then the greatest criminal trial of the century . . . the clearing up of over forty mysteries . . . and the rope for everyone.

WATSON

Good! But what will he do when he sees that you have him?

HOLMES

Do? He will do me the honor, my dear Doctor, of bending every resource of his wonderful organization of criminals to the one purpose of my destruction.

WATSON

Why, Holmes, this is a dangerous thing.

(Rises)

HOLMES

On the contrary, it's perfectly delightful! It saves me innumerable doses of those deadly drugs upon which you occasionally favor me with your medical views! Watson, my whole life is a series of frantic endeavors to escape the commonplace of existence! For a brief moment I escape! You should congratulate me!

WATSON

(Crosses over to R.)

But you could escape them without such serious risks! You other cases have not been so dangerous, and they were even more interesting.