A Study in Scarlet

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

In 1859, Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh to Irish Catholic parents Charles Doyle and Mary Foley. Though he is best known as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, he was also a physician, amateur sportsman, travel enthusiast, and spiritualist missionary. A prolific writer, Doyle wrote his first Holmes story in 1886. After being poorly paid by the publisher Ward Lock, Doyle began to publish his Holmes stories in the newly created *Strand Magazine*. Though Holmes and Watson met with great public acclaim and popularity, Doyle himself viewed his Holmes stories as "low art." Preferring to concentrate his literary energies on other matters, he wrote several historical novels based on British history (such as *Micah Clarke* and *The Great Shadow*), which he regarded as his greater work. In addition to his Holmes stories and historical novels, he also wrote a few medical articles, plays, and poetry collections, as well as political works defending the Boer War (for example, *The Great Boer War* and *The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct*, for which Doyle was awarded a knighthood) and other nonfiction books defending spiritualism, the belief that the living can communicate with the spirits of the dead, and the existence of supernatural phenomena (*The History of Spiritualism* and *The Coming of the Fairies*). In 1930, Doyle suffered a heart attack and died in Sussex at the age of 71. He had five children, Mary and Kingsley from his first wife Louisa Hawkins, and Denis, Adrian, and Jean from his second wife Jean Leckie.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The novel is set in the late 19th century, at a time when British imperialism was at its height and when an ideology of manifest destiny and the California gold rush motivated American pioneers to continue the westward expansion of the United States. At the beginning of the novel, John Watson has just come back to England from the Second Afghan War, which began in 1878 after the British invaded Afghanistan in order to prevent Russian expansion into India. In Part 2, when Doyle moves the narrative decades earlier to the American West, we see Lucy and John Ferrier, pioneers who struggle to survive in the desert after much of their settlement dies of dehydration. Lucy and Ferrier are saved, however, by the assistance of Mormons, or "Latter-Day Saints." Doyle sets this part of the story at the beginning of the Mormon movement under the leadership of Brigham Young, who appears as a character in the novel and who led his followers to Utah in the 1840s. The novel makes numerous negative references to the Mormon's polygamous practices as well as to horrors perpetrated by the Danite band, which is portrayed by Doyle (in a very controversial and sensationalized manner) as a brutal and mysterious secret police force.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Sherlock Holmes' predecessors in the genre of detective fiction include Edgar Allan Poe's detective Dupin and Émile Gaboriau's Monsieur Lecoq, characters that influenced the creation of Holmes, though Holmes himself derides the French literary detectives in *A Study in Scarlet*. The analytical tone of medical journals has made its way into the character of Sherlock Holmes and in John Watson's presentation of their cases together. The influence of American wild west stories, such as those by Zane Grey, is particularly apparent in *A Study in Scarlet*, which sets much of Part 2 in late 19th-century Utah.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** A Study in Scarlet
- **When Written:** 1886
- **Where Written:** England
- **When Published:** 1887
- **Literary Period:** Victorian literature
- **Genre:** detective fiction, crime fiction, serial fiction
- **Setting:** late 19th century London, American "wild west"
- **Climax:** Holmes captures Jefferson Hope
- **Antagonist:** Jefferson Hope; Brigham Young; Enoch Drebber; Joseph Stangerson
- **Point of View:** first person; third person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Image and substance. Though the name "Sherlock Holmes" often conjures up images of the detective in a deerstalker cap with a calabash pipe and magnifying glass, he rarely wore a cap in the original stories and he actually preferred a churchwarden pipe.

Real-life inspiration. The character of Holmes is based on Joseph Bell, a surgeon and one of Doyle's professors at medical school. Bell would often impress his students by deducing information about his patients with his keen observational skills.

PLOT SUMMARY

Part 1 of the novel is presented as an excerpt from the journal of John H. Watson, an army doctor who has just returned to England after being injured during the Second Afghan War. Watson is living in a London hotel, "leading a comfortless, meaningless existence," when he runs into an old colleague, Stamford. The two catch up, with Watson recounting to Stamford his misfortunes during the war and his need to find a less expensive residence. Stamford mentions that an acquaintance, Sherlock Holmes, is looking for a roommate, and after warning Watson about Holmes' eccentricity and scientific coldness, agrees to introduce them.

After Holmes and Watson meet to discuss the rooms and review their compatibility with each other, they move immediately into 221B Baker Street, and find each other easy to live with. As he has little else to do, Watson becomes increasingly interested in his roommate's eccentricities — such as his deep knowledge of chemistry and British law and simultaneous ignorance of literature and astronomy — and spends much of his time speculating about Holmes' profession but failing to come to a conclusion. Holmes, however, eventually reveals that he is a "consulting detective" who helps other detectives with their cases by applying "the science of deduction and analysis." Holmes claims that he is able to deduce the history and profession of any man through careful observation and analysis. Though Watson is skeptical, when a Scotland Yard messenger whom comes to their door confirms Holmes' deduction that he was once a Marine sergeant, Watson is amazed.

The messenger delivers a letter from a Scotland Yard detective, Tobias Gregson, asking for assistance on a recent murder case. Though Holmes is initially reluctant to take the case because Gregson and his colleague Lestrade will likely take the credit for solving it, Watson convinces him to take the case, and Holmes invites Watson to the crime scene at an empty house on Brixton Road. Approaching the house, Watson watches Holmes examine the road and garden path outside the house before they meet Gregson and Lestrade inside, where the body of an American man, Enoch Drebber, lies on the ground. Though there are splashes of blood all over the floor, there is no wound on the body, and on the wall, written in blood, is the word "RACHE."

Detectives Gregson and Lestrade are at a loss to explain the mystery, though Lestrade offers an incorrect theory that the murderer had tried to write "Rachel" but was disturbed before finishing. When the police move the body, they discover a small gold **wedding ring**. After Holmes thoroughly examines the room with his tape measure and magnifying glass, he soon disproves Lestrade's theory, saying that "RACHE" means "revenge" in German and that it was intended to put the police off the murderer's trail. Though Gregson and Lestrade are somewhat scornful of Holmes' methods, they are astounded when Holmes gives them a detailed profile of the killer: the murderer was six feet tall, with small feet, square-toed boots, a florid face, and long fingernails on his right hand. He smoked a Trichonopoly cigar, arrived with the victim in a cab whose horse had three old shoes and one new shoe, and he poisoned the victim.

Having learned all he can from the crime scene, Holmes decides to interview the constable who found the body. When Holmes and Watson visit the constable, John Rance, at his home, they find him unwilling to talk until bribed by Holmes, who learns that Rance had encountered no one near the scene of the crime, except an exceptionally drunk man. Deducing that the drunk man was actually the murderer in disguise, Holmes scolds the officer for his incompetence. On their way back to Baker Street, Holmes explains to Watson that the murderer had lost the ring and went back to the crime scene to look for it. In order to draw out the murderer, Holmes decides to put out a newspaper advertisement claiming that Watson has the lost ring and is willing to return it to its owner. That very night, an old woman visits 221B, claiming that the ring belongs to her daughter. Watson gives the woman the ring, and she leaves. Believing her to be the murderer's accomplice, Holmes follows her by secretly jumping onto the back of her cab. However, when the cab stops, the woman is nowhere to be found, leading Holmes to conclude that the old woman was actually a man in disguise.

The next day, Gregson visits Holmes and Watson at Baker Street and triumphantly informs them that he has arrested a man named Arthur Charpentier for Drebber's murder. Drebber, he discovered, had been staying at the boarding house of Arthur's mother and had attempted to abduct Arthur's sister Alice. As Arthur had angrily chased Drebber into the street and had no alibi for the time of the murder, Gregson took him into custody. However, Lestrade soon arrives to announce that there has been another murder. Intending to question Joseph Stangerson, Drebber's secretary, Lestrade found him stabbed to death in his hotel room with the word "RACHE" written on the wall. Though Lestrade did not find anything else about the room particularly important, Holmes realizes that the pillbox in Stangerson's hotel room is the last clue. After obtaining the pillbox from Lestrade, Holmes tests the two pills on an old dog in the building. The first pill has no effect, but the second pill immediately kills the dog, leading Holmes to conclude that the pillbox contained one poisonous pill and one harmless pill.

Just then, Wiggins, one of the street urchins employed by Holmes, arrives to tell him that the cab Holmes wanted is here. Requesting the driver's help with his luggage, Holmes summons the cab driver to the room. Catching the driver off guard, Holmes handcuffs him and introduces the driver to the others as Jefferson Hope, the murderer of Drebber and

Stangerson.

In Part 2, the story flashes back nearly 40 years to the desert in western America. It is 1847, and a man named John Ferrier and a little girl named Lucy are on the brink of death. The last survivors among pioneers who had died of dehydration and starvation, Ferrier and Lucy were unable to find water and are lying down to die. They are found, however, by a host of Mormons led by Brigham Young heading to what they call the new "promised land." Young offers them assistance only if they convert to Mormonism, and they agree, assimilating into the Mormon community in the newly built Salt Lake City. Ferrier adopts Lucy, raising her as his daughter, and she grows up to be a beautiful and strong young woman who falls in love with a Gentile (non-Mormon) hunter and silver prospector, Jefferson Hope.

Lucy and Hope become engaged and plan to get married after Hope returns from a two-month mining job in Nevada. Soon, rumor spends of their engagement, and Brigham Young visits John Ferrier to tell him that Lucy is forbidden from marrying a Gentile and that he has 30 days to force Lucy to marry either Enoch Drebber or Joseph Stangerson, sons of the Mormon elders. Ferrier, who views Mormon polygamous practices as shameful, never wanted his daughter to marry a Mormon, and sends out a message to Hope, asking for help. That day, he finds Stangerson and Drebber in his home, presumptuously arguing over who has the better claim to Lucy. Furious, Ferrier throws them out, and the men threaten retribution. The next day, Ferrier finds a note pinned to his blanket, warning that he has only 29 days left. The day after that, the number 28 mysteriously appears on the ceiling, and every day a new number appears around the house, counting down the days Lucy has left to make a decision between Drebber and Stangerson.

Two days before the Ferriers' time runs out, Hope finally arrives, helping them to escape Salt Lake City in the middle of the night. When their supplies begin to dwindle, Hope leaves Ferrier and Lucy at the campsite to hunt for food, but when he returns he finds the campsite empty, save for a dying fire and a newly dug grave for Ferrier. When Hope returns to Salt Lake City, he learns that Stangerson had murdered Ferrier and that Lucy was forced to marry Drebber. Now that Hope has nothing else to live for, he decides to devote the rest of his life to revenge.

A month after her wedding, Lucy dies, presumably out of grief or a broken heart, but Drebber, who married her for her father's property, is unconcerned. While Drebber's other wives mourn Lucy, Hope breaks into Drebber's house to kiss Lucy's forehead and to take her wedding ring, exclaiming that he will not let her be buried in it. For months, Hope lives in the mountains outside Salt Lake City, prowling around town and making close but unsuccessful attempts to take Drebber's and Stangerson's lives. Though Hope is intent on revenge, his time in the mountains damages his health, forcing him to return to his old job in Nevada to regain his health and earn money. Years later, he returns to Utah to kills Drebber and Stangerson, only to discover that they have broken from the church and moved away. For years, Hope travels from town to town in America looking for the men, tracking them to Cleveland and then all over Europe, until he finally found them in London.

The narrative now returns to Watson's account of Hope's capture. After a brief moment of wild resistance, Hope calms down and agrees to go with the men to Scotland Yard. Because he suffers from an aortic aneurysm that could burst at any time, Hope decides to tell his story to the detectives. The men he killed, he argues, were murderers themselves and deserved to die. He recounts his history with Drebber and Stangerson and their responsibility for the deaths of Lucy and John Ferrier. After he tracked the men to London, he became a cab driver and after following Drebber and Stangerson around the city, finally caught one of the men, Drebber, alone. As Drebber was drunk, it was easy for Hope to lead him to the house on Brixton Street, where he forced Drebber to take a pill from pillbox and took the other himself, leaving it to God to decide who would die. (Throughout the time he his telling this story to the detectives, Hope's aneurysm causes his nose to bleed, though he doesn't realize it at the time.) After Drebber died, an elated Hope decided on a whim to write "RACHE" on the wall to lead the police down the wrong path, and left the house.

Later, he realized that Lucy's ring was missing, so he returned to the crime scene but found Constable Rance already there and only narrowly avoided suspicion by pretending to be drunk. After seeing Holmes' advertisement in the paper, he had a friend disguise himself to pick up the ring at Baker Street. Hope had intended to enact the same revenge on Stangerson, but as news of Drebber's murder had already reached him, Stangerson was being even more cautious than usual. Hope, however, found a way into Stangerson's hotel room and attempted to force him to choose a pill, just as he did to Drebber. But Stangerson ignored the pills and attacked him, leading Hope to stab him in self-defense. Concluding his statement, Hope insists that he was acting as "an officer of justice."

Days later, Hope dies of his aneurysm before he was scheduled to appear in court. His body is found with a smile on his face, as if he is at peace. After withholding much information from Watson during the course of the investigations, Holmes now tells him everything, explaining how he had deduced Hope's identity and how he used street urchins like Wiggins to find him. Watson commends his detective skills, and Holmes shows Watson an article that gave Lestrade and Gregson full credit for solving the case. Indignant on Holmes' behalf, Watson decides to publish his account of the case to set the public straight.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Sherlock Holmes – The protagonist of the story, a consulting detective to the London police force (though they seldom give him credit for his help) who solves crimes while accompanied by his roommate John Watson. Though Holmes is highly intelligent, with sharp observational and deductive reasoning skills that allow him to understand a crime scene or deduce a person's history just by paying close attention, he can also be cold, petty, and arrogant. Though Holmes is vastly knowledgeable about certain areas, such as chemistry and British law, he is equally ignorant about others, such as astronomy. As Watson explains, Holmes is occasionally completely apathetic toward his surroundings but at other times is highly energetic and theatrical, particularly when he has a complex case to solve.

John H. Watson – The narrator for most of the novel, Watson is a British army doctor who was injured during the Afghan war. Upon his return to England he becomes Sherlock Holmes' roommate and companion. At the beginning of the novel, Watson often describes himself as friendless and lonely, with a "meaningless existence," but as he accompanies Holmes on the case, he befriends the consulting detective, despite all their differences. A foil to Holmes' analytical prowess, Watson is at once quite intelligent but also completely unable to follow Holmes' incredibly rapid deductions. Watson often marvels at his friend's abilities. Whereas Holmes is an eccentric and larger-than-life character, Watson allows us to view Holmes and their cases together through the eyes of an ordinary man.

Jefferson Hope – The antagonist and murderer of the case Holmes focuses on during *A Study in Scarlet*, Hope was originally an adventurous silver prospector who fell in love with Lucy Ferrier, who became his fiancée. After Lucy and John Ferrier's deaths due to the actions of the Mormons in general and Enoch Drebber and Joseph Stangerson in particular, Hope becomes obsessed with revenge and spends two decades pursuing the two men. Though he eventually achieves his revenge against Drebber and Stangerson, Hope's obsession leads him to his own destruction, for his prolonged periods of self-neglect as he pursues revenge destroys his health and causes the rupture of his aortic aneurysm.

John Ferrier – Devout and moral, John Ferrier adopts the young girl Lucy as his daughter after most of their pioneer town dies of dehydration. Ferrier proves himself to be a loving father and hardworking man, and after assimilating into the Mormon community, amasses a large amount of wealth. Unlike most Mormon men, however, he does not marry, as he views the Mormon practice of polygamy as shameful. He also vows to never let his daughter marry a Mormon. Eventually he is killed by Joseph Stangerson for trying to protect Lucy from a forced Mormon marriage.

Lucy Ferrier – John Ferrier's adopted daughter, Lucy grows up in the Mormon community as a strong and beautiful young woman. Eventually she falls in love with Jefferson Hope, a Gentile who becomes her fiancé. Though the Mormons refuse to allow her to marry a non-Mormon, she and her father escape with Hope. However, after the Mormons recapture her and kill her father, she is forced by the Mormons to become one of Enoch Drebber's wives. A month after her marriage, Lucy dies, presumably out of grief or a broken heart.

Enoch Drebber – The wealthy son of Elder Drebber, a leader among the Mormons, Enoch Drebber is the first murder victim that Holmes and Watson encounter in their "study in scarlet." He uses his power among the Mormons to force Lucy Ferrier to become one of his wives (he is a polygamist), causing her to die of a broken heart and prompting Jefferson Hope to seek revenge against him. Sometime after Lucy's death (and for unexplained reasons that don't seem connected to her death), Drebber and other younger members of the Mormon Church broke from the elders and became Gentiles. With Stangerson, Drebber travels throughout Europe in order to flee Hope. Throughout the story, Drebber reveals himself to be a drunken, presumptuous, and lecherous lout, groping the maids at the boarding house where he stays, including Alice Charpentier.

Joseph Stangerson – The son of Elder Stangerson, Joseph Stangerson was one of Lucy's unwanted polygamous suitors. Stangerson killed John Ferrier and helped kidnap Lucy, and so he is one of the two men against whom Jefferson Hope vows revenge. After breaking with the Mormon Church sometime after Lucy's death, he became Drebber's relatively poor secretary. Unlike Drebber, who is unintelligent and often drunk, Stangerson is sharper and more wary of Hope's attempts on their lives.

Brigham Young – A fictionalized depiction of the leader of the Mormons. A cold but capable leader, Young leads the Mormons to Utah, declaring it to be their promised land. On the way, Young saves the wayfarers John Ferrier and Lucy Ferrier, who are on the brink of death. However, he is also indirectly responsible for their deaths, as it is presumably by his orders or permission that Lucy is forced to marry Drebber and that Ferrier is killed.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Lestrade – A well-known Scotland Yard detective. Along with his rival Gregson, he is described by Holmes as "the pick of a bad lot." He is quick to jump to conclusions and is eager to claim credit for cases Holmes has solved.

Tobias Gregson – Described by Holmes as the "smartest of the Scotland Yarders" and, along with his rival Lestrade, "the pick of a bad lot." Like Lestrade, he often claims credit for cases solved by Holmes and is unwilling to publically acknowledge Holmes'

help.

Cowper – A Mormon acquaintance of Jefferson Hope. He informs Hope about Stangerson's murder of John Ferrier and Lucy's forced marriage to Drebber.

Elder Stangerson – One of the principal Mormon elders ("the Holy Four") who first takes charge of John Ferrier and Lucy. He is Joseph Stangerson's father.

Elder Drebber – One of the principal Mormon elders ("the Holy Four"). He is Enoch Drebber's father.

Elder Kemball – One of the principal Mormon elders("the Holy Four").

Elder Johnston – One of the principal Mormon elders("the Holy Four").

Stamford – Formerly a dresser at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and an old acquaintance of John Watson. He introduces Watson to Holmes.

John Rance – The constable who found Drebber's body at Lauriston Gardens but failed to realize that the drunk man he encountered while there was the murderer who had returned to the crime scene.

Madame Charpentier – Owner of the London boardinghouse at which Drebber and Stangerson stayed. She is the mother of Alice and Arthur Charpentier.

Alice Charpentier – Daughter of Madame Charpentier and brother of Arthur Charpentier. She is a victim of Enoch Drebber's unwanted sexual advances and his attempt to abduct her.

Arthur Charpentier – Naval officer and son of Madame Charpentier. He threatened Drebber after his attempt to abduct his sister Alice. Falsely accused by Gregson of murdering Drebber.

The Old Woman (Disguised friend of Jefferson Hope) – A clever and active young man who manages to deceive Sherlock Holmes and John Watson by dressing as an old woman.

Wiggins – Leader of the street urchins employed by Holmes.

Commissionaire – A former sergeant for the Royal Marine Light Infantry. He delivers to Holmes a letter from Gregson, asking for assistance on the Drebber case.

Murray – An orderly who saved Watson at the Battle of Maiwand during the Second Anglo-Afghan war.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

OBSERVATION AND DEDUCTION

Observation and deduction are the lifeblood of *A Study in Scarlet*, especially in terms of the novel's format and characterization of Sherlock Holmes. Much of the novel (all but five chapters out of fourteen) is presented as "reminiscences" from John Watson's journal, a record of his observations of both the case and Holmes. The first interaction between Watson and the consulting detective represents the essence of the Holmes-Watson dynamic throughout the story: Holmes is attentive to clues to which others are oblivious, allowing him to quickly deduce information (in this case, Watson's recent return from Afghanistan), and Watson is astonished by Holmes' abilities.

The narrator devotes an entire chapter to "The Science of Deduction," in which Watson makes his own observations of Holmes, attempting to determine the nature of his roommate's occupation based on the strengths and weaknesses in Holmes' knowledge. However, Watson finds himself unable to deduce what Holmes does for a living. By contrast, in his article "The Book of Life," Holmes claims that he can ascertain another person's history simply with careful observation (hence his deduction that Watson was an army doctor in Afghanistan).

Holmes' observational and deduction skills are crucial to his characterization, as these skills originally belonged to the real-life person who inspired Doyle's creation of Holmes: Joseph Bell. Doyle's former mentor, Bell was a surgeon with keen deductive reasoning skills. Like Holmes, he often made deductions about people based on his observations of minute details. While Watson's purpose in the novel is mainly to admire Holmes' skills (and thus Joseph Bell's skills), he also serves as a foil to Holmes. Unlike Watson, who makes observations about Holmes but cannot analyze them, Holmes skillfully employs both observation *and* analysis in his detective work. However, it is not merely the analytical skills that distinguish a great detective but also the ability to use them carefully. For example, though Lestrade spots the word "rache" at the crime scene first, he incorrectly jumps to the wrong conclusion that the writer had meant to write "Rachel." Holmes, on the other hand, observes the exaggerated German styling of the lettering and deduces that the murderer had written the German word for "revenge" in order to throw the police off his trail.

INJUSTICE AND HYPOCRISY

The novel belongs to the genre of detective fiction, and it is very much concerned with justice, which in its most immediate form entails the pursuit of the murderer. However, as the novel progresses, other forms of justice, or rather injustice, begin to emerge. Most prominent among the story's injustices are those committed by the Mormon characters. In a controversial and perhaps exaggerated depiction of Mormonism, Doyle presents the

Mormons' actions and practices as cruel, shameful, and hypocritical. For example, when the Mormons find John Ferrier and Lucy on the brink of death in the desert, a fictionalized version of the Mormon leader Brigham Young reveals that he is willing to let them die if they do not convert to Mormonism. When Ferrier first encounters the Mormons in the desert, they claim that they "seek a refuge from the violent man and from the godless." However, the narrator hints, in a very sensationalized account of the Mormon vigilante Danite band, that the "saints" themselves become violent against any potential dissenters, who mysteriously disappear if they voice their misgivings about Mormon practices. When Brigham Young gives Ferrier a month to force Lucy to marry either Drebber or Stangerson, the Mormons spend the next thirty days psychologically intimidating Ferrier by sending threatening notes and by leaving a countdown of numbers all over his house and farm. Eventually, John Ferrier becomes a victim of their violence, as Stangerson murders him in the name of keeping the Mormon faith. Jefferson Hope's murders – carried out as revenge for Drebber and Strangerson's actions – are therefore complicated in terms of justice. He sees his revenge as an act of justice, while the police see the crimes as injustices.

Doyle also reveals injustice and hypocrisy in the police force. For example, in Part 1, Constable John Rance readily accepts Holmes' bribe to tell his account of the moments after Drebber's death. Though detectives Lestrade and Gregson are "the pick of a bad lot" in the Scotland Yard, meaning that they are the best of a bunch of bad detectives, they are nonetheless inferior detectives to Sherlock Holmes and yet they often claim the credit for cases that Holmes solves. This pattern of injustice initially makes Sherlock reluctant to solve Drebber's case, the credit for which Lestrade and Gregson also claim. In the beginning of the novel, Holmes remarks to Watson that though the detectives might admit their inferiority to him when privately asking for his help, they would never admit it to anyone else. Intent on exposing their hypocrisy, Watson publishes his journal recounting "the study in scarlet," informing the public of Holmes' efforts in bringing the murderer to justice, while simultaneously achieving for Holmes a professional or historical kind of justice by exposing Gregson's and Lestrade's inferior detective work. The book itself, then, is presented as an act of "justice" in the way it gives Holmes the credit he rightfully deserves. At the same time, the book plays with the idea of justice and injustice, and finding the gray areas that connect the two.

GENDER AND MISOGYNY

Though the novel itself may not be misogynistic, it reveals sexist attitudes and practices toward women in both England and America at the time that Doyle was writing. Holmes and Watson, the story's protagonist and narrator, both casually insult women as being vain and weak, despite lack of evidence or evidence to the contrary from the story's female characters. For example, when Holmes recounts to Watson the competition between Gregson and Lestrade, he remarks, "They have their knives into one another, too. They are as jealous as a pair of professional beauties [the late 19th century equivalent of socialites or models]." Watson, recounting to the reader Sherlock's vanity, notes, "I had already observed that he was as sensitive to flattery on the score of his art as any girl could be of her beauty." After Holmes realizes that the old woman he was following had escaped him, he exclaims, "We were the old women to be so taken in. It must have been a young man, and an active one, too, besides being an incomparable actor." Though the old woman in disguise was actually a man, Holmes does not seem to consider the possibility that a woman could have been strong or clever enough to escape him. Yet contrary to Holmes' and Watson's apparently ingrained beliefs about women, none of the novel's few female characters seem particularly weak or vain about their appearance, least of all Lucy Ferrier, who is described as both unaware of her beauty and strong enough to manage horses "with all the ease and grace of a true child of the West."

Most strikingly misogynistic, however, is the novel's presentation of Mormon marriage practices and of the men's attitudes toward women. For example, Doyle presents polygamy as an essential part of following the Mormon faith. However, while men were expected to have multiple wives, the women were not allowed to have multiple husbands. Doyle's fictionalized version of the Mormons' leader, Brigham Young, further emphasizes this misogyny by describing women and girls as a supply of "heifers" to be distributed among the men. Even more troubling is the narrator's sensationalized account of rumors of "fresh women" who were brought to "the harems of the Elders" and who "bore upon their faces the traces of an unextinguishable horror" — suggesting that they were abducted, forced into marriage, and in all likelihood raped. This foreshadows Lucy's own experience, as Drebber later abducts her and forces her to marry him. Just as the "fresh women" were treated by Mormon men as sexual and reproductive objects, Drebber also sees Lucy as no more than an economic advantage. After Lucy dies, the narrator reveals that Drebber had married her in order to gain control of her father's property. Such marriages as Lucy's date as far back as the Middle Ages, when men sometimes raped wealthy young women in order to force them into marriage and thus control their inheritance. Though Drebber's primary motive is revealed to be primarily economic rather than sexual or reproductive, he still objectifies Lucy by forcing her to submit to his will.

Non-Mormons in the story also exhibit a patriarchal attitude toward women and marriage, though not to the same extremes as Doyle's Mormons. For example, though Jefferson Hope

clearly loves Lucy, he views his marriage to her as a way of "claiming" her. Even Lucy, despite her fortitude as a pioneer woman, has a sense of internalized misogyny and regards the men in her life as her principal authority. When Hope proposes their engagement, Lucy remarks, "Of course, if you and Father have arranged it all, there's no more to be said."

REVENGE AND MURDER

The novel's title, *A Study in Scarlet*, is drawn from Holmes' reference to murder as a "scarlet thread…running through the colourless skein of life." That the "skein of life" is "colourless" suggests that much of everyday life, to Holmes at least, is uninteresting. In contrast, the passionate motivations that culminate in a murder make it vibrant and exciting for him. To Holmes, Jefferson Hope's murder of Enoch Drebber and Joseph Stangerson is just such a case and pulls him out of the occasional lethargy that Watson observes in him. Just as importantly, though, Holmes doesn't seem much to care about the morality of murder. Instead, he sees murder almost in artistic or aesthetic terms, as something that amplifies all the passions of otherwise boring life, something that defies easy understanding and therefore must be understood.

In contrast to Holmes' rather amoral reasons for solving murders, Hope's act of murder is fueled by revenge. And revenge is an act of murder that is founded entirely on morality, as it is an effort by the murderer to punish those who harmed him or those he loved. Hope views his murder of Drebber and Stangerson primarily as a form of justice for Lucy, whom Drebber abducted and forced into marriage, and for Lucy's father John Ferrier, whom Stangerson murdered. In fact, Hope directly connects his revenge to what he sees as a kind of divine morality when he forces Drebber to choose between one of two pills, only one of which is poison. When Drebber chooses the poisonous pill, Hope believes he does so because God would not allow a man like Drebber to survive. Even after being caught by Holmes, Hope claims that he is no mere murderer but an "officer of justice."

However, the novel's depiction of revenge is not entirely positive. Hope's revenge is destructive not only for his enemies but also for himself. His desire for revenge is all-consuming. He spends 20 years pursuing Drebber and Stangerson across America and Europe, often neglecting his own health and finances. Though Hope eventually achieves his revenge, it also ultimately destroys *him*, as his self-neglect leads to malnutrition and overexposure, which in turn leads to an aortic aneurysm that kills him the night after he is captured.

Yet despite the destructive nature of revenge, Hope's successful revenge also brings him peace and joy. After Hope dies, Watson observes the "placid smile" found on the corpse, reflecting that it is as if "he had been able in his dying moments to look back upon a useful life and on work well done." Though Watson is fully engaged in the effort to bring the murderer – Hope – to justice, his narration makes it clear that he sympathizes to some extent with Hope and with his motivations, even if he continues to view *any* murder as a crime requiring justice.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

LUCY'S WEDDING RING

Though wedding rings are normally symbols of unity, Lucy's ring represents division and the perversion of marriage, as well as the way in which Lucy is objectified. Whereas in traditional monogamous marriages, the father peacefully "gives" the bride to the groom during the ceremony, the Mormons kill Lucy's father John Ferrier in order to abduct her and force her into a shameful polygamous marriage with Enoch Drebber. Though the act of "giving away" one's daughter in marriage is itself a form of objectification – in that it treats a woman as an object to be passed from father to husband – the forced marriage and the manner by which it is achieved amplifies Lucy's objectification by treating the marriage primarily as a form of theft. Drebber and Stangerson kill John Ferrier in order to steal his "property" — both Lucy herself and Ferrier's extensive farmlands. As a result of the marriage, Lucy is forever torn from her beloved fiancé, Jefferson Hope, and soon dies, presumably out of grief or a broken heart. For Hope, the ring not only reminds him of his lost love but of the burning obsession with revenge that fuels him for the next twenty years. It is for the sake of this revenge that Hope uses the ring to remind Drebber of his crimes during his dying breaths.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Penguin Classics edition of *A Study in Scarlet* published in 2001.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Quotes

> I had neither kith nor kin in England, and was therefore as free as air — or as free as an income of eleven shillings and sixpence a day will permit a man to be. Under such circumstances I naturally gravitated to London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained. There I stayed for some time at a private hotel in the Strand, leading a comfortless, meaningless existence, and spending such money as I had, considerably more freely than I ought.

Related Characters: John H. Watson (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 8

Explanation and Analysis

The novel opens with John Watson's dreary return to England after sustaining a shoulder injury while fighting in Afghanistan. "Free as air," and without any friends or family, Watson is isolated and lonely. He places himself in the same rank as "loungers and idlers," and despite his small income, he chooses to live in a hotel beyond his means. He considers his existence "meaningless," perhaps as a result of his traumatic time at war or because of his social isolation. However, everything once he meets and befriends Sherlock Holmes, whose intelligence, eccentricities, and murder case pique his interest and bring new life into Watson.

> Holmes is a little too scientific for my tastes — it approaches to cold-bloodedness. I could imagine his giving a friend a little pinch of the latest vegetable alkaloid, not out of malevolence, you understand, but simply out of a spirit of inquiry in order to have an accurate idea of the effects. To do him justice, I think that he would take it himself with the same readiness. He appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge....Yes, but it may be pushed to excess. When it comes to beating the subjects in the dissecting-rooms with a stick, it is certainly taking rather a bizarre shape.

Related Characters: Stamford (speaker), Sherlock Holmes, John H. Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 10

Explanation and Analysis

While catching up with Stamford, an old colleague, Watson becomes interested in an acquaintance of Stamford's who has expressed a desire to find a roommate. Stamford, however, warns Watson about Sherlock Holmes' eccentricities. To Stamford, Holmes is too "cold-blooded." His remark that Holmes would poison a friend without hesitation for the sake of his "passion for definite and exact knowledge" is not unlike Holmes' use of Watson's name in a newspaper advertisement to draw the murderer to their home. Though he apologizes to Watson for doing so, he does not consult Watson beforehand and justifies his behavior with the greater probability that the murderer will arrive. Obsessed with murder cases and his "science of deduction," Holmes does not seem to have any moral or social qualms about such matters, and seems not to know or care about what is usually considered acceptable in society at large.

> Let me see — what are my other shortcomings. I get in the dumps at times, and don't open my mouth for days on end. You must not think I am sulky when I do that. Just let me alone, and I'll soon be right. What have you to confess now? It's just as well for two fellows to know the worst of one another before they begin to live together.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), John H. Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 13

Explanation and Analysis

Holmes and Watson have just met and are gauging their compatibility as roommates by discussing their faults. Holmes' comment that he "get[s] in the dumps" for days at a time is perhaps a reference to depression, drug use (which Watson dismisses in this novel but which is confirmed in later Holmes stories), or to Holmes' deep dissatisfaction with everyday matters that do not concern the "scarlet thread" of murder with which he is obsessed. Though Holmes purports to confess "the worst" of himself, he does not — despite his keen observation skills — confess his arrogance, which emerges several times in the novel.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Quotes

Nothing could exceed his energy when the working fit was upon him; but now and again a reaction would seize him, and for days on end he would lie upon the sofa in the sitting-room, hardly uttering a word or moving... I have noticed such a dreamy, vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic, had not the temperance and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion.

Related Characters: John H. Watson (speaker), Sherlock Holmes

Related Themes:

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis

Holmes and Watson have just settled into their apartment. Watson, who has little to occupy himself, is fascinated with Holmes and closely observes him, noting how Holmes fluctuates for days at a time between periods of lethargy and energy. Watson dismisses his suspicion of drug addiction, as Holmes doesn't seem the type, but later Sherlock Holmes stories such as "The Sign of the Four" confirm Holmes' drug use.

Another explanation for Holmes' extended periods of lethargy could be depression, which may be caused by the lack of interesting cases for him to solve. As he hints later on, he views murder as the "scarlet thread" in an otherwise "colourless skein of life" — that is, murder and the mystery surrounding it is the one truly interesting part of life. It is only when Holmes decides to take on Drebber's murder case that he is able to shake off his lethargy and spring back into action.

I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things, so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skilful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order... It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), John H. Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 17

Explanation and Analysis

When Watson discovers with amazement that Holmes did not know that the earth travelled around the sun, Holmes explains his careful selection of knowledge with his famous brain attic theory — the idea that the brain can hold only a limited amount of information. Holmes claims to have "nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work." Holmes' ability to quickly access information related to his observations is key to his utilization of the "science of deduction."

By comparing his own selective and organized acquisition of facts to the indiscriminate and disorderly intake of a "fool," Holmes also implies, in his usual superior manner, that Watson's intellect is inferior to that of his own.

Its somewhat ambitious title was "The Book of Life", and it attempted to show how much an observant man might learn by an accurate and systematic examination of all that came in his way. It struck me as being a remarkable mixture of shrewdness and of absurdity. The reasoning was close and intense, but the deductions appeared to me to be far-fetched and exaggerated. The writer claimed by a momentary expression, a twitch of a muscle or a glance of an eye, to fathom a man's inmost thoughts. Deceit, according to him, was an impossibility in the case of one trained to observation and analysis. His conclusions were as infallible as so many propositions of Euclid. So startling would his results appear to the uninitiated that until they learned the processes by which he had arrived at them they might well consider him as a necromancer.

Related Characters: John H. Watson (speaker), Sherlock Holmes

Related Themes:

Page Number: 19

Explanation and Analysis

One day at breakfast with Holmes, Watson spots a magazine article, "The Book of Life," on the table and begins to read it. Initially unbeknownst to Watson, the article was

written by Holmes and details the science of deduction, the means by which Holmes is able to discover information about people. Watson is skeptical, as the article combines sharp reasoning with "far-fetched and exaggerated" deductions. Later in the novel, Holmes also exhibits this "remarkable mixture of shrewdness and of absurdity," but however seemingly far-fetched Holmes' deductions are, he always proves to be right. Watson soon discards his skepticism in favor of a deep admiration of Holmes, thus forging the foundation of their relationship in this novel — Watson's continual astonishment at Holmes' skills. Just as Holmes in his article portrays the master of deduction as a "necromancer" (a magician or sorcerer) in the eyes of "the unitiated," so he actively encourages his reputation as "conjurer" by dramatically withholding information about his deductions from Watson and the other detectives.

❝ "There are no crimes and criminals in these days," he said, querulously. "What is the use of having brains in our profession? I know well that I have it in me to make my name famous. No man lives or has ever lived who has brought the same amount of study and of natural talent to the detection of crime which I have done. And what is the result? There is no crime to detect, or, at most, some bungling villainy with a motive so transparent that even a Scotland Yard official can see through it."

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), John H. Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 23

Explanation and Analysis

After Holmes explains to Watson his occupation as a consulting detective, he complains that there aren't any crimes befitting his skills. Lamenting the inability to use his extraordinary intellect, Holmes displays his extraordinary arrogance, claiming that he is the best detective in history and that cases solvable by the Scotland Yard are beneath him. Importantly, Holmes also reveals his need for attention, his desire to "make [his] name famous." Though in this scene, Watson perceives Holmes as conceited, by the end of their "study in scarlet," Watson devotes himself to this very end, publishing his account of the case and Holmes' skills as a form of literary justice for Holmes.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ "Gregson is the smartest of the Scotland Yarders," my friend remarked; "he and Lestrade are the pick of a bad lot. They are both quick and energetic, but conventional — shockingly so. They have their knives into one another, too. They are as jealous as a pair of professional beauties. There will be some fun over this case if they are both put upon the scent."

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Tobias Gregson, Lestrade, John H. Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 26

Explanation and Analysis

After receiving a letter from Gregson asking for assistance on a difficult murder case, Holmes gives Watson his opinion of both Gregson and Lestrade. Though Holmes finds all of the Scotland Yard police force to be incompetent, Gregson and Lestrade are slightly less so. Holmes summarizes the detectives' relationship as one based on competition and casually demeans them as "professional beauties," that is, women in the 19th century who were akin to socialites or models today. Though Holmes amuses himself at Gregson's and Lestrade's expense, he does not realize that he too engages in this petty competition with them throughout the case, when he repeatedly insults their inferior deduction skills and races against them to solve the case first.

❝ On his rigid face there stood an expression of horror, and, as it seemed to me, of hatred, such as I have never seen upon human features. This malignant and terrible contortion, combined with the low forehead, blunt nose, and prognathous jaw, gave the dead man a singularly simious and ape-like appearance, which was increased by his writhing, unnatural posture. I have seen death in many forms, but never has it appeared to me in a more fearsome aspect than in that dark, grimy apartment, which looked out upon one of the main arteries of suburban London.

Related Characters: John H. Watson (speaker), Enoch Drebber

Related Themes:

Page Number: 30

Explanation and Analysis

After Holmes' extensive examination of the grounds leading up to Lauriston Gardens, Watson and Holmes enter the crime scene and find Drebber's corpse on the floor. Watson's concentration on Drebber's facial features anticipate his later reliance on physiognomy (the pseudoscience of determining character traits based on physical features) to describe Drebber's character as containing "vice of the most malignant type." Doyle's (or rather Watson's) portrayal of Drebber as "ape-like" is perhaps meant to dehumanize him and to sympathize with his murderer, Jefferson Hope, as Drebber is later revealed to have been an immoral, hypocritical, and violent man.

Though Watson had witnessed violent deaths as a soldier in Afghanistan, Drebber's death is nevertheless more horrifying, possibly because his murder occurred in London, the nation's capital and emblem of "civilization," rather than in the context of war, where death is expected, or in a non-Western country such as Afghanistan that was seen as less civilized by British imperialists.

❝ "They say that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains," he remarked with a smile. "It's a very bad definition, but it does apply to detective work."

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Lestrade, Tobias Gregson, John H. Watson

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

Holmes has just spent 20 minutes going over the crime scene, with Lestrade, Gregson, and Watson watching his inscrutable and eccentric examinations and mutterings to himself. Though Holmes seems satisfied with his observations, he does not initially inform his audience of his findings and instead chooses to highlight that he, unlike the detectives, has "tak[en] pains" by carefully combing over the crime scene, and that therefore he, unlike the detectives, is a genius. Holmes' extreme thoroughness is at once a tool that he applies to his obsession with solving complex murder cases and a way for him to show off his skill and intelligence. His delay in sharing information about the case in favor of displaying his superiority is a behavior that recurs throughout the novel, suggesting that his need to prove his intellect is perhaps a driving factor in his obsession with murder.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ "I'm not going to tell you much more of the case, Doctor. You know a conjurer gets no credit once he has explained his trick; and if I show you too much of my method of working, you will come to the conclusion that I am a very ordinary individual after all."

"I shall never do that," I answered; "you have brought detection as near an exact science as it ever will be brought in this world."

My companion flushed up with pleasure at my words, and the earnest way in which I uttered them. I had already observed that he was as sensitive to flattery on the score of his art as any girl could be of her beauty.
"I'll tell you one other thing," he said.

Related Characters: John H. Watson, Sherlock Holmes (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 38

Explanation and Analysis

Watson and Holmes have just discovered that Constable Rance unknowingly let the murder, who returned to the crime scene, walk away. Though Watson has many questions about the case, Holmes does not want to divulge his findings, as pulling back the curtains for Watson would cause him to find Holmes "ordinary." Holmes wants to be viewed as a "conjurer" or, as he mentioned in his magazine article, as a "necromancer" who astounds his audience. In this respect, Holmes ironically shows himself to *be* rather ordinary, as the desire to be special and thus to receive more attention is by no means uncommon. Watson finds that he is able to use this flaw to his advantage, flattering Holmes to his face while showing us, the readers, his vanity — which Watson misogynistically attributes to women and which causes Holmes to divulge more about the case.

❝ I shall have him, Doctor — I'll lay you two to one that I have him. I must thank you for it all. I might not have gone but for you, and so have missed the finest study I ever came across: a study in scarlet, eh? Why shouldn't we use a little art jargon? There's the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it.

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), John H. Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 42

Explanation and Analysis

After discovering that the murderer returned to the crime scene, Holmes deduces that he returned to look for the lost wedding ring and decides to use the ring as bait to draw out the murderer. Excited by the imminent pursuit, Holmes rhapsodizes about murder, calling it a "scarlet thread" in the "colourless skein of life." That Holmes finds "the skein of life" to be "colourless" suggests that he finds much of life dull and uneventful. Murder, by comparison, is a vivid "scarlet"—it is aesthetically interesting and pleasing to Holmes, and a puzzle that must be "unraveled." Holmes' attitudes toward murder and the rest of everyday life seem to correspond to his fluctuating periods of intense energy and apathy (as well as his perceived "cold-bloodedness"). Without murders to solve, Holmes listlessly lounges in the apartment. When he begins working on Drebber's case, he becomes energetic and full of life once more. Like Hope, who is sustained by revenge, Holmes is sustained by his murder cases.

Part 1, Chapter 6 Quotes

Oh, bless you, it doesn't matter in the least. If the man is caught, it will be *on account* of their exertions; if he escapes, it will be *in spite* of their exertions. It's heads I win and tails you lose. Whatever they do, they will have followers. "Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire."

Related Characters: Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Lestrade, Tobias Gregson, John H. Watson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 51

Explanation and Analysis

Responding to various newspapers' praise of Gregson's and Lestrade's involvement on the case, Holmes tells Watson that the detectives' roles in the case will be irrelevant to how they are portrayed in print. Whether they catch the murderer or not, they will still be praised and admired. Holmes quotes the French poet Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, saying "A fool always finds a greater fool to admire him." To Holmes, Gregson and Lestrade are both fools, and praise of them is unwarranted. Holmes, however, doesn't seem to be against praise or admiration in itself (he himself continually seeks the admiration of Watson and the Scotland Yarders), but merely the praise of those he considers his inferiors.

Part 2, Chapter 3 Quotes

He had always determined, deep down in his resolute heart, that nothing would ever induce him to allow his daughter to wed a Mormon. Such a marriage he regarded as no marriage at all, but as a shame and a disgrace. Whatever he might think of the Mormon doctrines, upon that one point he was inflexible.

Related Characters: Lucy Ferrier, John Ferrier

Related Themes:

Page Number: 88

Explanation and Analysis

A few weeks after Lucy's engagement to Jefferson Hope, Ferrier is reflecting on his daughters upcoming marriage and his opinions on Mormon polygamy. A source of gossip in the Mormon community, the mystery of why Ferrier never married is now revealed: he views polygamy as shameful and false. That Ferrier's opinions on Mormon marriage differ so starkly from Mormon doctrine sets him apart from the community. That Ferrier is represented as not only a devout Christian and but also the archetypal American serves to set up a dichotomy between traditional Christianity and Mormonism, and between American values and Mormon values. Doyle therefore presents Mormon polygamy as both anti-Christian and anti-American.

Yes, a dangerous matter — so dangerous that even the most saintly dared only whisper their religious opinions with bated breath, lest something which fell from their lips might be misconstrued, and bring down a swift retribution upon them. The victims of persecution had now turned persecutors on their own account and persecutors of the most terrible description. Not the Inquisition of Seville, nor the German Vehmgericht, nor the Secret Societies of Italy, were ever able to put a more formidable machinery in motion than that which cast a cloud over the State of Utah.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 88

Explanation and Analysis

The narrator here explains why Ferrier doesn't voice his

opposition to Mormon polygamy. In a sensationalized description of a Mormon vigilante group, the narrator reveals that any hint of a dissenting opinion results in the persecution of the (perceived) dissenter. The narrator hyperbolically claims that Mormon persecution is more terrifying than comparable European organizations that served as secret tribunals with the power to sentence people to death.

The rise of violence among the Mormons highlights their hypocrisy. They had escaped from Illinois to Utah in order to "seek a refuge from the violent man," but now they are becoming violent against their own church members. The unjust persecution of potential dissenters terrorizes the rest of the community, stifling any freedom of speech they may have had as Americans.

❝ The supply of adult women was running short, and polygamy without a female population on which to draw was a barren doctrine indeed. Strange rumours began to be bandied about — rumours of murdered immigrants and rifled camps in regions where Indians had never been seen. Fresh women appeared in the harems of the Elders — women who pined and wept, and bore upon their faces the traces of an unextinguishable horror. Belated wanderers upon the mountains spoke of gangs of armed men, masked, stealthy, and noiseless, who flitted by them in the darkness. These tales and rumours took substance and shape, and were corroborated and recorroborated, until they resolved themselves into a definite name. To this day, in the lonely ranches of the West, the name of the Danite Band, or the Avenging Angels, is a sinister and an ill-omened one.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 89

Explanation and Analysis

Especially controversial is Doyle's depiction of horrors inflicted by the Mormon persecutors, known as the Danite Band, who murder immigrants and abduct non-Mormon women, who are then forced into polygamous marriages with and most likely raped by the Mormon oligarchs. The narrator portrays Mormon polygyny (when a man marries multiple wives) as both impractical and as fostering violence. Though the Mormons had moved to Utah to escape "the violent man," now they are not only persecuting their own community members but also murdering innocent non-Mormons and subjecting women to sexual violence. The corruption among the Mormons thus spreads beyond their own community, harming others in the process.

Part 2, Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ "We have come," continued Stangerson, "at the advice of our fathers to solicit the hand of your daughter for whichever of us may seem good to you and to her. As I have but four wives and Brother Drebber here has seven, it appears to me that my claim is the stronger one."

"Nay, nay, Brother Stangerson," cried the other; "the question is not how many wives we have, but how many we can keep. My father has now given over his mills to me, and I am the richer man."

"But my prospects are better," said the other, warmly. "When the Lord removes my father, I shall have his tanning yard and his leather factory. Then I am your elder, and am higher in the Church."

"It will be for the maiden to decide," rejoined young Drebber, smirking at his own reflection in the glass. "We will leave it all to her decision."

Related Characters: Enoch Drebber, Joseph Stangerson (speaker), Enoch Drebber, Elder Stangerson, Lucy Ferrier, John Ferrier

Related Themes:

Page Number: 93-94

Explanation and Analysis

After Brigham Young threatened Ferrier and Lucy with an ultimatum, Ferrier sends out a message to Jefferson Hope in the city, and returns to find Drebber and Stangerson already in his house. The two young men here presumptuously argue over who should marry Lucy, based on their wealth and existing number of wives. Drebber and Stangerson casually objectify their wives, referring to them as if they were collectibles or pets. As their argument reveals, a marriage to either one of them would not be founded on love, as is Lucy's relationship with Jefferson Hope, but rather on the men's ability to manage the expense of "keeping" an extra wife.

Adding insult to injury, Drebber falsely claims that Lucy's marriage is entirely her decision, despite the fact that Brigham Young has already threatened Lucy's life in order to force her to marry one of the men. The Mormons' insistence that Lucy marry a Mormon man is motivated not

only by their rejection of Hope, a Gentile (non-Mormon) but also an implicit gender ideology that women must be married and thus dependent on men. They don't, by contrast, insist that men must marry Mormon women, as they don't force Ferrier to marry and as they bring in supplies of "fresh" and presumably non-Mormon women to be used by the Mormon Elders.

Part 2, Chapter 6 Quotes

"It don't much matter to you why I hated these men," he said; "it's enough that they were guilty of the death of two human beings — a father and a daughter — and that they had, therefore, forfeited their own lives. After the lapse of time that has passed since their crime, it was impossible for me to secure a conviction against them in any court. I knew of their guilt though, and I determined that I should be judge, jury, and executioner all rolled into one. You'd have done the same, if you have any manhood in you, if you had been in my place."

Related Characters: Jefferson Hope (speaker), Lucy Ferrier, John Ferrier, John H. Watson, Sherlock Holmes, Tobias Gregson, Lestrade, Enoch Drebber, Joseph Stangerson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 113

Explanation and Analysis

After Holmes brings Hope to the Scotland Yard, Hope decides to make a full statement, as his aortic aneurysm could prevent him from telling his story at any time. Hope views his murder of Drebber and Stangerson as just, but his conception of justice is not the traditional European conception of justice as blind and impartial, but rather a more personal, vengeful "eye for an eye" form of justice that might be found in the American Wild West stories that Doyle favored as a child. To Hope, Drebber and Stangerson "forfeit" their lives because they are responsible for the deaths of Lucy and John Ferrier. Courtroom justice is inexistent or inaccessible in Hope's Wild West, and he takes it upon himself as "judge, jury, and executioner" to carry out vigilante justice, despite the fact that the Mormons' vigilantism was in large part responsible for the very deaths he was avenging. Hope further justifies his actions as a sign of his "manhood," a patriarchal value with which he appeals to his captors (all men) but which he ironically does not realize helped to facilitate Lucy's forced marriage to Drebber.

Let the high God judge between us. Choose and eat. There is death in one and life in the other. I shall take what you leave. Let us see if there is justice upon the earth, or if we are ruled by chance.

Related Characters: Jefferson Hope (speaker), Enoch Drebber

Related Themes:

Page Number: 119

Explanation and Analysis

After finally getting an opportunity to isolate one of his enemies, Hope forces Drebber to choose between two pills, one of which is poison and the other harmless. He views this as a test of divine justice, letting God decide whether Drebber picks the poison and dies. However, Hope's premise — that the test will prove that the world is ruled either by divine justice or by chance — is inherently flawed, as Hope implies that divine justice would necessitate Drebber's death and that only "chance" would necessitate Drebber's survival. This is illogical, as chance by definition would allow for either eventuality, but it lets Hope feel that he is an agent of divine justice rather than a murderer intent on revenge.

Part 2, Chapter 7 Quotes

"...It is an open secret that the credit of this smart capture belongs entirely to the well-known Scotland Yard officials, Messrs Lestrade and Gregson. The man was apprehended, it appears, in the rooms of a certain Mr Sherlock Holmes, who has himself, as an amateur, shown some talent in the detective line, and who, with such instructors may hope in time to attain some degree of their skill. It is expected that a testimonial of some sort will be presented to the two officers as a fitting recognition of their services."

"Didn't I tell you so when we started?" cried Sherlock Holmes, with a laugh. "That's the result of all our Study in Scarlet; to get them a testimonial!"

"Never mind," I answered; "I have all the facts in my journal, and the public shall know them."

Related Characters: John H. Watson, Sherlock Holmes (speaker), Jefferson Hope, Lestrade, Tobias Gregson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 127

Explanation and Analysis

The case now solved, Holmes and Watson discuss the particulars of the case and the newspapers' account of what happened. Though Holmes is not surprised, Watson is indignant that the newspapers praise Lestrade's and Gregson's supposed capture of Jefferson Hope and demean Holmes' skill as "an amateur." Though Holmes has been seeking recognition for much of the novel, he is uncharacteristically neutral when Watson declares his intent to publish his own account of the case from his journal. Watson's publication would inform the public that it was actually Holmes' superior detective skills and talent that were crucial to Hope's capture, thereby attaining a form of justice for Holmes by giving him the credit he deserves.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PART 1, CHAPTER 1: MR SHERLOCK HOLMES

The narrator, John H. Watson, opens the novel by recounting his career as a young doctor. In 1878, after he received his MD in London, he studied to become an army surgeon. By the time he was sent to India to serve with the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers, the second Afghan war had already begun and the regiment was now in Afghanistan. Traveling from Bombay to Candahar, he arrived in Afghanistan safely and joined his regiment as an assistant surgeon. Eventually, he was reassigned to the Royal Berkshire Regiment. With the Berkshires, he fought in the Battle of Maiwand, where he was badly injured and saved from capture only by the heroic actions of his orderly, Murray.

Doyle situates the novel during a time of violent British imperialism. Watson is just returning from the second Anglo-Afghan war, which began after the British invaded Afghanistan to prevent Russia from spreading its influence into India. Though the British were defeated at the Battle of Maiwand in 1880, they ultimately won the war, gaining territory in Afghanistan.

Watson was brought with other wounded soldiers to a hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan, where his health began to improve until he came down with enteric fever. After months of illness, Watson was sent back to England with his health in ruins and with no family or friends to rely upon. Though he had little wealth, he moved to London, among "the loungers and idlers," living extravagantly in a hotel and "leading a comfortless, meaningless existence." Soon, however, Watson realizes that he cannot maintain such an expensive lifestyle and decides that he must completely change his way of living.

Watson characterizes himself as lazy, self-indulgent, and living a meaningless life. Though these qualities may be due to his poor health and social isolation, they could also indicate stress from his wartime experiences.

On the same day that Watson resolves to change his lifestyle, he encounters an old colleague, Stamford, at the Criterion Bar. Though they weren't particularly good friends, Watson is happy to see a familiar face and invites Stamford to have lunch with him at the Holborn restaurant. The two men catch up, and Watson reveals that he is looking for a less expensive but comfortable place to live. Stamford remarks that another man who was working in the hospital lab had told him earlier that day that he was seeking a roommate.

Though Watson had just decided to live his life more frugally, he is spending his time (and money) at expensive places like the Criterion and the Holborn. Watson's delight at seeing an old acquaintance suggests that he is lonely, contributing to his sense of leading a "meaningless" life.

Excited by this news, Watson tells Stamford he would be glad to have a roommate, as he would rather not be alone. Though Stamford says Sherlock Holmes is "a decent fellow enough," he appears wary, saying that Watson may not want to be Holmes' roommate. He begins to describe Holmes as a man well-versed in certain branches of science, extremely knowledgeable about esoteric subjects, and at some times reserved and at other times talkative. Watson, declaring that he would prefer a roommate "of studious and quiet habits," asks Stamford to introduce them after lunch. On the way to the hospital laboratory, Stamford and Watson discuss Holmes further. Stamford remarks that the man is "a little too scientific for my tastes—it approaches to cold-bloodedness," and tells Watson how he once saw Holmes beating corpses with a stick to study post-mortem bruise patterns.

Watson gets his first introduction to Holmes' many eccentricities through Stamford, whose description of Holmes as "cold-blooded" comprises a key part of Holmes' characterization, especially in contrast to Watson's warmth and humanity. His callous willingness to beat corpses for the sake of science is indicative of his obsession with murder, and the eclectic combination of his studies anticipates his later explanation of the "brain attic," and its utility for his work.

Arriving at the hospital's chemistry laboratory, Watson and Stamford are approached by a jubilant Holmes, who declares to Stamford that he has discovered a precise method to detect hemoglobin. Stamford introduces Watson to Holmes, who immediately detects that Watson has been in Afghanistan. Brushing off Watson's astonishment, Holmes launches into an explanation and demonstration of his experiment, claiming that it is "the most practical medico-legal discovery for years," and that it gives "an infallible test for blood stains." Holmes claims that his discovery surpasses the old tests for detecting blood and could have been instrumental in catching hundreds of murderers who walked free. Holmes then begins to recite a list of cases in which the test could have been applied, until Stamford brings his attention to the matter at hand, explaining that Watson, like Holmes, is looking for an apartment.

Though Holmes shows himself to be extremely intelligent, he is also proud and wants an audience. He launches into a long speech and demonstration with barely an introduction to Watson, whom he has just met for the first time, and does not seem all that concerned at first with the reason for his interlocutors' visit. Holmes demonstrates for the first time in the novel his extraordinary ability to deduce information about people, as well as his tendency to dramatically delay in explaining the reasons for his deductions.

Delighted, Holmes tells Watson he has found a place on Baker Street, and they begin to discuss their shortcomings to determine their compatibility: Holmes smokes tobacco, does chemistry experiments, and sometimes goes into long silent periods of being "in the dumps," while Watson objects to loud noises because of shaken nerves, gets up at all hours, and is "extremely lazy." Nevertheless, the two men agree to meet again the next day to view the apartment. Leaving the lab with Stamford, Watson wonders aloud how Holmes knew about Afghanistan. Stamford remarks that Holmes mysteriously knows things about many people, piquing Watson's interest in his new roommate.

Despite their differences in manner and personality, Holmes and Watson seem to be complementary roommates. While Holmes appears very industrious and energetic, Watson is "extremely lazy" and becomes easily fatigued. Holmes' long periods of being "in the dumps" are suggestive of depression, while Watson's shaken nerves could be caused by what would become known during World War I as "shell shock" or post-traumatic stress disorder.

PART 1, CHAPTER 2: THE SCIENCE OF DEDUCTION

The next day, Holmes and Watson inspect the apartment at No. 221B, Baker Street, and are so pleased with the rooms that they decide to move in immediately. Watson finds Holmes easy to live with, as he is "quiet" and follows routine habits. Holmes is usually out of the house before Watson gets up in the mornings and spends his days working in the laboratory or in dissecting rooms, or taking long walks throughout London. Watson observes that Holmes can be extremely energetic during his work but at times falls into periods of addiction-like lethargy for days. Watson, however, dismisses the possibility that Holmes could be an addict because of how orderly his life is.

Holmes and Watson become easy roommates, despite or perhaps because of their differences. In contrast to Holmes' industriousness at the lab, Watson spends his days doing little at home. Holmes' long periods of silent lethargy could indicate depression, though Watson initially suspects (and soon dismisses) drug addiction. Though later Holmes stories confirm the detective's cocaine usage, Holmes' depressed mood could also be due to his lack of interesting murder cases over which to obsess.

Watson's curiosity about Holmes deepens the longer they live together. He describes Holmes' appearance as striking, as he is over six feet tall, very thin, with sharp eyes, a "hawk-like" nose, and ink-stained fingers with an "extraordinary delicacy of touch." Watson then breaks from the narrative in order to justify his intense interest in Holmes — he reminds the reader that his life was "objectless," that his health prevented him going out, and that he had no friends who would visit him. The mystery of who Holmes is constitutes Watson's only form of entertainment.

Watson reveals his intense, almost homoerotic interest in Holmes, as well as his loneliness. Watson's wartime experiences seemingly push him to become obsessed with his roommate, especially as Holmes is the only person that Watson has in his life. The mystery of Holmes' work serves to abate Watson's previous sense of his own "meaningless" existence.

Watson begins to spend his time trying to determine what Holmes does. He determines that his roommate is not studying medicine or any particular area for a degree, and that while he has extraordinary mastery over certain areas of knowledge, he is also ignorant of many other areas, such as astronomy and literature. Reacting to Watson's surprise about his ignorance, Holmes explains his theory that the human mind is like an attic — that it must store only useful information in an organized manner, so that useless facts don't crowd out facts that may be of use in his work.

Watson is further introduced to Holmes' eccentricities and eclectic range of knowledge. Holmes here introduces his famous brain attic theory, hinting that he only takes in the knowledge necessary for him to do his work. Clearly many fields of interest give him no pleasure simply because they seem "useless."

Believing Holmes would be unwilling to discuss his profession yet still curious about the nature of his work, Watson draws up a list of Holmes' areas of knowledge, mastery, and ignorance. He determines that Holmes is knowledgeable about chemistry, British law, human anatomy, sensational literature, and some areas of geology and botany, and is an excellent athlete and violinist, but that he has little knowledge of literature, politics, philosophy, and astronomy. Unable to determine what Holmes needs these particular skills for, Watson soon gives up his quest to discover what Holmes does.

As Watson observes Holmes, he systematically records Holmes' areas of knowledge and strengths, hoping to discover Holmes' profession. However, unlike Holmes, who was able to deduce Watson's recent return from Afghanistan from little more than a glance, Watson quickly resigns from his quest, demonstrating his inferior analysis skills despite his careful observation, as well as his self-described laziness.

In their first few weeks on Baker Street, Holmes and Watson have no visitors, leading Watson to conclude that Holmes was "as friendless a man as I was myself." Soon, however, Holmes begins to receive many visitors of varying social classes and ages, including a Mr. Lestrade, a "little sallow, rat-faced, dark-eyed fellow" who comes several times a week. Watson learns that these visitors are Holmes' clients, but he still does not feel able to ask his roommate about his work. Soon, however, Holmes reveals the nature of his work on his own.

Doyle further contrasts Watson and Holmes. While Watson is completely alone, Holmes regularly talks with clients from all walks of life. And whereas Holmes will do nearly anything to find something out (such as beating corpses to study postmortem bruising patterns), Watson will not do something as basic as ask his roommate's profession for the sake of propriety.

One day, Watson gets up earlier than usual and sits down at the breakfast table with Holmes. On the table is a magazine article, "The Book of Life," which proposes that through careful observation and the "science of Deduction and Analysis" one can learn a stranger's history and profession. Watson finds the article to be "a remarkable mixture of shrewdness and absurdity," with sharp reasoning but "far fetched and exaggerated" deductions. Skeptical about the author's claims, Watson dismisses the article as "rubbish" only to discover that Holmes himself wrote it.

Watson's characterization of the article's ideas closely matches the character of Holmes himself, who is both a shrewd and absurdly larger-than-life figure.

Holmes explains that he uses his theories in the article on a regular basis for his work as a consulting detective. He takes on private and government detectives like Lestrade as clients, setting them on the right path toward solving their cases while helping to "enlighten" others in trouble. For the most part, Holmes is able to solve cases merely by listening to the evidence presented by his clients, but occasionally goes out to observe evidence first-hand for more complex cases. To prove to Watson the utility and veracity of the science of deduction, Holmes explains how he knew that Watson had come from Afghanistan without being told. Based on his observations of Watson's partially tanned skin, military manner, and shoulder injury, Holmes concluded that Watson was an army doctor wounded in the tropics and that the most likely place this could have occurred was Afghanistan.

Introducing Watson into his thought processes, Holmes establishes his superiority to police and private detectives. Demonstrating his deductive skills, he also solves for Watson the small mystery of how he knew Watson had come from Afghanistan.

Now that Holmes has explained his reasoning, Watson finds his claims "simple enough" and compares him to Edgar Allan Poe's and Gaboriau's literary detectives Dupin and Lecoq, both of whom Watson admires. Holmes, however, dismisses Dupin and Lecoq as inferior detectives to himself. While Watson is thinking to himself that Holmes, however intelligent he may be, is "certainly very conceited," Holmes complains that his talents are wasted on the lack of true criminals and more difficult cases. Watson then sees a man outside the apartment and tries to change the subject by asking what he might be looking for, but is further annoyed when Holmes deduces that the man is a retired marine sergeant. When the man, a commissionaire (or messenger), knocks on their door to leave Holmes a letter, Watson seizes the opportunity to prove Holmes wrong by asking the man his profession, to which the man replies that he was once a sergeant with the Royal Marine Light Infantry.

The earliest literary detectives, Dupin and Lecoq, created by Edgar Allan Poe and Gaboriau respectively, were part of the inspiration for Sherlock Holmes. Ironically, however, Holmes criticizes them as inferior to himself, demonstrating his arrogance and perhaps also Doyle's claim to Holmes' literary (as well as sleuthing) superiority. This causes Watson to be annoyed and to pettily attempt to disprove one of Holmes' casual deductions, but Holmes again proves to be right. Gregson and Lestrade will echo this behavior, repeatedly doubting Holmes' deductions only to be astonished when Holmes is right. Unlike the Scotland Yard detectives, however, Watson soon recognizes Holmes' brilliance without resentment.

PART 1, CHAPTER 3: THE LAURISTON GARDEN MYSTERY

Watson is astonished that Holmes was right and asks how he deduced the man's profession. Describing the thought process as second nature, Holmes explains that the man's tattoo, military manner, regulation sideburns, self-importance, and age were all clues. Holmes appears pleased at Watson's resulting admiration, and shares the commissionaire's note with him. Written by Tobias Gregson, the note asks for Holmes' assistance on a case at Number 3, Lauriston Gardens, on Brixton Road. The corpse of an American man, Enoch Drebber, was found in an empty house with no apparent wound marks or robbery evident.

Though Holmes' thought process is presented here as perfectly logical, it also demonstrates the "mixture of shrewdness and absurdity" of Holmes' claims in his magazine article. Though Holmes seems to be operating on probability, he does not take into account the possibility that the messenger's tattoo, manner, and sideburns could have other explanations. Reacting to Watson's admiration of his deductions, Holmes inadvertently reveals his susceptibility to flattery.

Holmes describes Gregson as "the smartest of the Scotland Yarders," and remarks that he and Lestrade are "the pick of a bad lot," and extremely competitive with each other (like "a pair of professional beauties"). Expecting Holmes to assist on the case immediately, Watson is surprised at Holmes' reluctance. Though Gregson asks humbly for Holmes' help, Holmes claims that Gregson "would cut his tongue out before he would own" his inferiority to Holmes to anyone else, and says that he and Lestrade will probably claim all the credit for solving the case. Despite this, Holmes decides to go anyway, if only to amuse himself at the expense of Gregson and Lestrade.

Holmes' half-hearted praise of Gregson and Lestrade is more of an insult than a compliment, as he considers all of Scotland Yard to be inferior to himself; Gregson and Lestrade are just slightly less inferior. By expressing his reluctance to solve the case because of the likelihood that Gregson and Lestrade will claim the credit, Holmes shows both his resentment of the detectives' hypocrisy and his desire for attention.

As Watson has nothing better to do, he accompanies Holmes to Brixton Road. On the hansom ride there, Holmes chats about violins, refusing to theorize about the case as he has not yet seen the evidence. Arriving at 3, Lauriston Gardens, Watson observes the dilapidated and dreary façade of the building and the dying plants of its gardens. Though Watson expected Holmes to rush into the crime scene immediately, Holmes nonchalantly examines the grounds, the sky, the house's surroundings, and the many footprints leading to the door before finally reaching the crime scene, where Gregson, a tall, pale, fair-haired man, greets them, informing them that Lestrade is also present.

Doyle presents Holmes as a scientist, who unlike Watson, relies on empirical data to form conclusions rather than trying to form conclusions without any data. Describing Watson's and Holmes' observations of the scene, Doyle further contrasts the two by highlighting the scope of their observation skills. Whereas Watson focuses on the building and the yard in front of it, Holmes studies the road and pathways leading up to the building, as well as the rest of the house's surroundings and the sky.

The room is large, dusty, and without any furniture. Strips of wallpaper have begun to peel off the mildewed walls. On the floor is the body of a well-dressed dark-haired man in his forties. The man's face is frozen in horror and hatred, and his limbs are positioned oddly, as if he had been struggling. Though Watson has "seen death in many forms…never has it appeared to [him] in a more fearsome aspect than in that dark, grimy apartment, which looked out upon one of the main arteries of suburban London."

Despite Watson's witnessing of death as a doctor and as a soldier, he finds Drebber's death especially unnerving, because it occurred in "one of the main arteries of suburban London." Drebber's death is shocking because it occurs in "civilization" and suggests darker reasons for death than war or illness, contexts in which death is expected.


Though the man's body has no visible wound, there are splotches of blood all over the floor. Holmes deduces that it is most likely the murderer's blood. After he examines the body, he instructs the detectives to have it brought to the mortuary as there is "nothing more to be learned." As Gregson's men carry out the body, a **ring** falls to the floor. Lestrade picks up the small gold ring, declaring it to be a woman's wedding ring. Though Holmes claims the ring simplifies matters, he doesn't explain further and instead inquires about the contents of the man's pockets. Gregson informs him that Drebber had a gold watch and chain, as well as business cards printed with his name, and letters from a steamship company, addressed to Drebber and to Joseph Stangerson, about their upcoming return to New York.

Holmes' casual command to the detectives demonstrates his power over them (or at the very least, his sense of superiority to them). Holmes heightens this sense of superiority by hinting at but not revealing his opinions about the ring. By showing off to the detectives while simultaneously keeping them in the dark, Holmes remains a step ahead of them in the investigation, apparently intent on solving the case on his own rather than collaborating with or assisting the Scotland Yard detectives.


In the house's hallway, Gregson tells Holmes that he sent out inquiries about Stangerson, but Holmes seems at once unsatisfied and superior about this, hinting that Gregson should have inquired about some "circumstance on which this whole case appears to hinge." During Gregson's and Holmes' discussion, Lestrade has been in another room, but now returns triumphantly to inform Gregson of a discovery he's made. On part of the wall, beneath the peeling wallpaper, the word "RACHE" had been written in blood.

Once again, Holmes hints at knowledge he possesses but does not reveal it, despite the fact that doing so may help the investigation. Holmes' continual hinting and withholding of knowledge is perhaps due to his need to solve the case himself, suggesting that his priority is not necessarily catching the murderer, but catching the murderer first and in a dramatically pleasing way. Though Holmes had earlier mocked Lestrade's and Gregson's competition with each other, he doesn't seem to realize that he too is competing with them.


Lestrade brags that he alone made the discovery and concludes that the murderer had meant to write the name "Rachel" but was unable to finish. While Lestrade is in the midst of explaining his hypothesis, Holmes laughs at Lestrade and proceeds to examine the room. Using a tape measure and magnifying glass, Holmes goes over the entire room, sometimes kneeling and lying down on the floor, all the while talking to himself. Watson compares him to a "pure-blooded, well-trained foxhound."

Though Lestrade's theory is quite reasonable, he is jumping to conclusions, a fact which Holmes openly mocks by laughing at him. Holmes' measuring tape and magnifying glass (now a classic Holmesian icon), as well as his physical interaction with the room and mutterings to himself serve to accentuate his eccentricity. Watson's comparison of Holmes to a foxhound anticipates his similarity to Hope.

Though Gregson and Lestrade watch Holmes "with considerable curiosity and some contempt," they eagerly ask for Holmes' opinions. Holmes sarcastically claims that he wouldn't want to rob them of credit for helping with the case and decides to speak to the constable, John Rance, who found Drebber's body. Before he and Watson leave, however, Holmes gives the Scotland Yard detectives "one thing which may help": the murderer was a six-foot-tall man with small feet, square-toed boots, a florid face, and long fingernails on his right hand; he smoked a Trichinopoly cigar and arrived with the victim in a four-wheeled cab drawn by a horse with one new shoe and three old shoes. Astounding the Scotland Yard detectives, Holmes also informs them that Drebber was poisoned, that "rache" is the German word for "revenge," and that searching for a "Rachel" would be useless.

Despite their resentment of Holmes' superior detective skills and of Holmes' superior attitude toward them, the detectives need Holmes, who can't help but "one-up" Gregson and Lestrade, even if it means helping the competition. Holmes' "one thing" turns out to be a slew of potentially useful details about the murderer. Lestrade's reasonable though perhaps conventional assumption that "rache" was meant to be "Rachel" turns out to be the more sensational German word"rache," meaning "revenge."

PART 1, CHAPTER 4: WHAT JOHN RANCE HAD TO TELL

After the men leave Lauriston Gardens, Holmes mails out a telegram and they make their way to the home of the constable, John Rance. On the cab ride over, Watson is skeptical about Holmes' confidence in the details he provided to the detectives. Holmes explains that he knew about the cab and the horse's shoes based on the markings that the wheel and hoofprints made on the ground, that he deduced the murderer's height and age from his stride length, his boot type from his footprints, his long fingernails from scratches on the wall, and the Trichonopoly from its ashes. Though he believes he was correct, Holmes confesses that the florid face was more of a guess, but he refuses to tell Watson how he came to this deduction.

Holmes explains his deduction process to a skeptical Watson (and thus to the readers as well, justifying the details he had provided about the murderer. Again, Holmes hints at secret knowledge (in this case, his reason for guessing that the murderer has a "florid" face) but chooses not to explain it.

Mystified by the case, Watson asks how the men ended up in the house, how the murderer could have forced Drebber to poison himself, where the blood and the **ring** came from, what the murderer wanted, and why he wrote "RACHE" on the wall. Holmes tells Watson that "RACHE" (written in Gothic script, which real Germans would use only for printed, not handwritten, text) was intended to be a red herring to lead the police toward Socialist secret societies. Holmes doesn't tell Watson any more, though, because "a conjurer gets no credit once he has explained his trick; and if I show you too much of my method of working, you will come to the conclusion that I am a very ordinary individual after all." However, when Watson praises Holmes for bringing deduction to an exact science, Holmes is pleased, as Watson had known he would be, and reveals that the murderer and Drebber came in the same cab and walked into the house together.

Watson summarizes the main questions of the case, but Holmes, deciding not to tell Watson any more, reveals that he doesn't tell others much information about his methods or his knowledge, because he doesn't want to be perceived as "ordinary." Despite his claims to the scientific rigor of deduction in his magazine article, Holmes views (or likes to view) himself partly as a kind of conjurer, or magician, always astounding his audience. Watson, however, already knows this and is able to flatter Holmes into telling him more. In this instance, Holmes and Watson briefly exchange roles, with Watson gaining the upper hand in his ability to manipulate Holmes.

The cab stops at John Rance's house in Audley Court, a dingy place surrounded by dirty children and lines of dirty laundry. The constable seems unwilling to talk, but once Holmes takes out a gold coin Rance readily tells him about his night shift. At around one in the morning, Rance was talking with another policeman, and an hour or so later he decided to check Brixton Road, which was empty except for a cab or two. Rance knew part of Lauriston Gardens was supposed to be empty, and became suspicious when he saw a light in the window. Rance found the house empty, save for a lit candle on the mantelpiece and Drebber's body on the floor. The constable then exited the house and sounded his whistle, attracting the attention of other policemen. At that time, the streets were empty, except for a tall, red-faced drunk man in a brown coat.

Rance's eagerness to take a bribe is a clear example of corruption and injustice in the police force. Rance's description of the man as tall and red-faced matches Holmes' description of the murderer, and his mention of a cab on Brixton Road foreshadows the revelation of Jefferson Hope (a cab driver) as the murderer.

Holmes asks if the man was carrying a whip, but Rance says no, and Holmes mutters to himself that he must have left it elsewhere. Giving the constable the gold coin, Holmes declares that Rance will never be promoted, as he let the suspect, the apparently drunk man, walk free. On the cab ride back, Watson asks why the murderer would come back to the house. Holmes tells him that he came back for the **ring**, and that they can use the ring to draw out the murderer. He then thanks Watson for pushing him to take the case, as it is "the finest study [he] ever came across." Calling it "a study in scarlet," Holmes declares that it is their duty to "unravel" the "scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life."

Holmes' question about a whip is a hint that the murderer drives a cab. Scolding Rance for his incompetence, Holmes again displays his sense of superiority to Scotland Yard. Holmes' enthusiastic description of murder as "scarlet thread" in a "colourless skein of life" suggests the polarity of his attitudes toward murder and toward everyday life. Whereas murder is "scarlet" — that is, vibrant and waiting to be unraveled — the "skein of life" is "colourless" and uninteresting to Holmes. Clearly he sees solving a murder as an aesthetic activity or a pleasurable puzzle more than a matter of justice.

PART 1, CHAPTER 5: OUR ADVERTISEMENT BRINGS A VISITOR

As their morning adventure had left him exhausted, Watson tries unsuccessfully to get some sleep but cannot stop thinking about the "distorted, baboon-like countenance of the murdered man." Convinced that Drebber's face reveals "vice of the most malignant type," Watson feels "gratitude" toward Drebber's murderer, while simultaneously recognizing that "justice must be done, and that the depravity of the victim was no condonement in the eyes of the law." Unanswered questions about the nature of Drebber's murder, his supposed poisoning, run through Watson's mind, though he is sure that Holmes already has all the answers.

Claiming that Drebber's "baboon-like" face reveals his vice, Watson tacitly endorses the pseudoscience of physiognomy—the practice of determining one's character from their facial features. By doing so and by expressing his "gratitude" toward the murderer, Watson is priming us to feel sympathy towards Jefferson Hope, while still maintaining his belief that the murderer must be caught for the sake of both the law's justice and Holmes' reputation.


Holmes, who had attended a concert after questioning Rance, returns home late, his mood raised from the concert music. Watson, on the other hand, is still troubled by the case, which has left him with a greater sense of unease than seeing his "own comrades hacked to pieces at Maiwand." Holmes attributes this to the air of mystery around the case and shows Watson the advertisement he sent out to the papers. Holmes published an announcement that a **gold wedding ring** had been found near a tavern by Brixton Road and that its owner should seek Watson at their apartment between 8 and 9 in the evening. Holmes gives Watson a facsimile of the ring to give to the murderer, and Watson gets out his old revolver.

Holmes and Watson's contrasting moods after their morning adventure reveal another difference between the two. Whereas Watson is deeply disturbed by the murder, Holmes appears unaffected and even happy. Though Watson had witnessed brutal deaths in Afghanistan, he is more horrified by Drebber's death, perhaps because it occurred in a context in which death is unexpected. Holmes displays his callousness through his lack of concern for the loss of human life as well as through his use of Watson as bait.

At around 8, the bell rings, and a servant lets in an old woman with a harsh voice. The woman, who says her last name is Sawyer, claims that the **ring** belongs to her daughter Sally Dennis. Following Holmes' signal, Watson gives the ring to the woman, who thanks him and leaves. Soon after, Holmes goes out to follow her, believing her to be an accomplice of the murderer. Four hours later, Holmes returns, torn between "chagrin" and "amusement," the latter of which wins out. Laughing at himself, Holmes describes to Watson how the woman had hailed a cab, shouting out her address, and how Holmes had secretly hitched a ride on the back of the cab. When they pulled up to her address, however, the driver discovered that the cab was empty, while Holmes discovered that there is no Sawyer or Dennis at the address she had given.

Despite his arrogance, Holmes shows that he is able to laugh at himself, and that he is not completely unaware of his personal faults. He also shows that he is appreciative of cleverness, even from his opponents, and even if it is demonstrated at his own expense. Holmes' appreciation of the woman's escape anticipates his later appreciation of Hope's intelligence. Clearly he is pleased to have a worthy adversary, as it makes the case more interesting for him.

Watson expresses his amazement that an old woman could have outwitted Holmes, who exclaims, "We were the old women to be so taken in." Holmes comes to the conclusion that it must have been a young man disguised as an old woman. Watson turns in for the night, but Holmes stays up late, meditating on the case and absentmindedly playing his violin.

Despite his admiration of the accomplice's escape, Holmes is still annoyed with himself, as expressed in his misogynistic assumption that his being tricked is akin to being a woman.

PART 1, CHAPTER 6: TOBIAS GREGSON SHOWS WHAT HE CAN DO

The next day, reports of the "Brixton Mystery" fill the papers, which Watson and Holmes read together at breakfast. Watson summarizes to the reader the findings of a few newspapers, most of which insinuate that liberalism or socialism was at work and which praise Lestrade's and Gregson's involvement in the case. Despite the newspapers' misinformation, Watson learns some new facts about the case, such as the fact that Drebber and Stangerson had been staying at a boarding house belonging to Madame Charpentier in Camberwell (a district in London), that they had been seen together at a train station, and that Stangerson's whereabouts are unknown.

The newspapers' reports on the "Brixton Mystery" prove to be grossly wrong, both in their theories regarding the murderer's motivations and in their high praise of Lestrade's and Gregson's detective work. The papers' attribution of credit to the Scotland Yard detectives even before the case is solved is a form of injustice that Watson will later try to correct in his account of the murder case.

Moments later, Watson hears a multitude of footsteps on their stairs, and Holmes informs him that it is "the Baker Street division of the detective police force." When Watson opens the door he sees six urchins, whom he describes as "the dirtiest and most ragged street Arabs," standing at attention. Their leader, Wiggins, reports that they have not yet found something Holmes is looking for. Holmes pays them a shilling each and sends them off to keep looking. He remarks to Watson that they are more useful than many among the police force and that he has hired them to work on the Brixton case.

A "street Arab" is an antiquated (and needless to say, racist) term for a homeless child. Watson's view of the children as unsavory reveals his elitist attitude toward people of lower social classes. By contrast, Holmes recognizes their merit, acknowledging them to be superior to the Scotland Yard policemen. His ability to see past their social class is perhaps a consequence of his defiance of many social mores. Identified as the Baker Street Irregulars in the book The Sign of the Four, Holmes' "street Arabs" were likely inspired by Doyle's childhood leadership of his own street gang.

At this moment, Gregson approaches the apartment, seeking congratulations for solving the case. Holmes appears anxious until Gregson tells him that he has arrested Arthur Charpentier, a sublieutenant in the navy. Relieved, Holmes smugly asks the Scotland Yard detective to tell them more. Gregson, who is only too pleased to ridicule Lestrade's pursuit of Stangerson, proudly explains how he had noticed the maker of Drebber's hat and had found Drebber's address at Madame Charpentier's through the hat seller.

Holmes' initial worry that Gregson has caught the murderer indicates his desire not merely to have the case solved, but to solve it himself, and to solve it first. Though he is amused by the gibes Gregson and Lestrade aim at each other, Holmes also participates in this petty competition.


Gregson visited Madame Charpentier, whose daughter Alice was visibly upset. Madame Charpentier originally claimed that the last time they saw Drebber was at eight o'clock the night before his death, when he left for the train station. But at Alice's prompting, Charpentier told the truth. Drebber and Stangerson had stayed at their boarding house for three weeks. Drebber was often drunk and brutish, his behavior "disgustingly free and familiar" toward the maids. However, because he was paying her well, Madame Charpentier allowed him to stay until he grabbed Alice and tried to kiss her. When her son Arthur walked in on Drebber trying to abduct Alice, Arthur went into a rage and chased Drebber into the street. The next morning Drebber was dead.

Confirming Watson's certainty that Drebber was malicious, Madame Charpentier discloses Drebber's attempted sexual assaults on and misogynistic behavior toward the maids and Alice. His attempted abduction of Alice echoes his abduction of Lucy (as we earn later). But whereas Drebber was successful in abducting Lucy, he is prevented from doing the same to Alice by her brother, whose anger at Drebber arouses Gregson's suspicion.


Gregson continued to question Madame Charpentier, who revealed that Arthur does not have an alibi for Drebber's murder. Holmes congratulates Gregson on his theory that Arthur is the murderer, and Gregson, not realizing that Holmes is mocking him, again derides Lestrade's pursuit of Stangerson. At that moment Lestrade arrives, disheveled and troubled. He announces that Joseph Stangerson was murdered in his hotel at six o'clock that morning.

Though Gregson's suspicion of Arthur, who had motive and opportunity to kill Drebber, is perfectly reasonable, Holmes nevertheless mocks Gregson's actions, revealing his own pettiness and sense of superiority. Stangerson's surprising murder suddenly undercuts both Gregson's claim that Arthur is the murderer and Lestrade's suspicion that Stangerson himself was guilty.

PART 1, CHAPTER 7: LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Watson, Holmes, and Gregson are shocked at the news of Stangerson's death. Holmes requests Lestrade's account of his investigations, and the detective obliges, admitting that he had thought Stangerson was the murderer. With little success, Lestrade had spent the entirety of the previous day inquiring into Stangerson's whereabouts between his meeting with Drebber at the train station and the time of Drebber's murder. Lestrade ascertained that Stangerson was staying at Halliday's Private Hotel. Wanting to catch Stangerson off guard, Lestrade went up to his hotel room—only to discover blood pooling out from behind Stangerson's door. With the help of some men, Lestrade broke down the door and found Stangerson's dead body on the floor next to an open window. Stangerson had been stabbed in the heart and above him was written the word "RACHE" in blood.

Like Gregson, Lestrade had been chasing down an erroneous lead, much to the amusement of both Gregson and Holmes. However, Holmes had not anticipated Stangerson's death, proving that he is not infallible. Just as in Drebber's crime scene, the word "rache" was written in blood near the body; however, unlike Drebber's murder, which was caused by poison, Stangerson's death was caused by a stab to the heart.

Lestrade tells the others that the culprit had been seen by a milk boy, who described the man as tall with a reddish face and a brown coat. Like Drebber, nothing had been stolen from Stangerson after his death. Stangerson carried no papers except a telegram saying "J. H. is in Europe." At Holmes' prompting, Lestrade lists other objects in the room: a novel on the bed, a pipe on the chair, a glass of water on the table, and a box of pills on the windowsill. Though Lestrade believes these are unimportant details, Holmes springs up and triumphantly announces that he has found "the last link…My case is complete."

The milk boy's description of Stangerson's murderer matches the constable's description of the drunk passerby and Holmes' deductions about Drebber's murderer. Seemingly out of the blue, Holmes gleefully and theatrically announces to the room that he has solved the case, again playing the role of magician for his audience.

Claiming he will prove his solution to the case, Holmes asks Lestrade for the pills, which the detective happened to collect at the crime scene. Holmes turns to Watson, asking if the light-colored and translucent pills are ordinary, to which Watson responds that they are likely water-soluble. At Holmes' request, Watson fetches the landlady's sick terrier—which he was supposed to euthanize the day before—and Holmes cuts one of the pills in half, dissolves a half into a mixture of milk and wine, and feeds it to the dog. The men watch the dog silently and expectantly, but nothing happens. Minutes pass by, and Holmes appears chagrined while Lestrade and Gregson are smug.

Indulging in showmanship just as he did when demonstrating his hemoglobin test, Holmes intends to prove his theory by engaging Lestrade and Watson in audience participation. Luckily, Watson's laziness left the landlady's dog (mentioned for the first time here) still intact and conveniently available to test the pills found near Stangerson.

Holmes almost begins to doubt himself, but then "with a perfect shriek of delight" he cuts the other pill in half, dissolves it into some milk, and feeds it to the dog, who immediately dies. Relieved that his reasoning was correct, Holmes declares that one of the pills was poisonous and the other harmless. He launches into a speech explaining why the detectives have failed to solve the case, but is interrupted by Gregson, who demands to know the identity of the murderer. Though Lestrade and Watson also urge him to reveal his findings about the murderer, Holmes is reluctant, as he is close to catching the man and doesn't want Lestrade or Gregson to ruin the set-up.

Initially worried that he was wrong, Holmes is relieved to see that his theory is correct. As he had shown with his brief concern that Gregson may have solved the case before him, few things seem to disturb Holmes as much as the possibility of being bested by men he regards as his inferiors. Recovering from his self-doubt, he becomes once again arrogant and superior, rubbing in Gregson's and Lestrade's noses the fact of their failure.

At that moment, someone knocks at the door. It is Wiggins, leader of the "street Arabs," who announces to Holmes that he has the cab downstairs. Holmes tells Wiggins to ask the cab driver to help him with his boxes. Under the pretense of requesting the driver's assistance with his luggage, Holmes manipulates the driver into bending down, allowing the consulting detective to put handcuffs around his wrists. Holmes introduces the man to the room as "Mr. Jefferson Hope, the murderer of Enoch Drebber and of Joseph Stangerson." Hope frees himself from Holmes and attempts to throw himself out the window, but Gregson, Lestrade, and Holmes drag him back. Holmes declares that they will take the man's cab to Scotland Yard and that he will answer any questions about his investigations into the case.

Wiggins returns, solving the mystery of what Holmes had the street urchins looking for. Once again, Holmes indulges in the theatricality of a magician, deftly handcuffing the cabdriver without him noticing and announcing to his audience the final act: the capture of Drebber's and Stangerson's murderer, Jefferson Hope. Triumphant, Holmes takes charge of the situation. Only now that he has solved the case, thus demonstrating his superior detective skills, he is willing to reveal his knowledge.


PART 2, CHAPTER 1: ON THE GREAT ALKALI PLAIN

No longer narrated by John Watson, Part 2 shifts to the American desert stretching from the Sierra Nevada to Nebraska, between the Yellowstone and Colorado Rivers. Coated in alkali dust, this "land of despair" is hostile to all but the coyote, the buzzard, and the grizzly bear. If one were to look down from the Sierra Blanca, one would see a pathway on the desert created by caravan wheels and footprints, with human and oxen bones littered along the way. It is May 14, 1847, and a lone man is looking down on this scene. He is thin and haggard and must support himself with his rifle. Slowly dying of hunger and dehydration, he searches hopelessly for signs of water but cannot find any.

Part 2 begins an extended flashback to the mid-1800s in the American west. The starkness of the landscape sets the tone for the story to come. The desert represents death, and though Ferrier and Lucy narrowly escape their fate with the help of the Mormons, the very same people who save the Ferriers also become responsible for their deaths later. The narrator's description of the desert as coated with alkali dust anticipates Jefferson Hope's use of alkaloid poisons on Drebber and Stangerson, correcting the injustice the Ferriers' deaths in the desert with a reminder of the desert itself.


The man drops his rifle to the ground, as well as a gray parcel carrying a young child. The child, a five-year-old girl, is pale but healthy. Her mother, along with the rest of their town, had recently died of dehydration, so the man took the girl with him to find water. Now, however, the man tells her that they will probably die and that she will soon see her mother again in heaven. The man and the child get down on their knees and pray, after which they fall asleep.

The man appears to be kind and caring. Though the man is described as haggard and thin, the child is not, suggesting that he had probably been taking care of her at the expense of his own well-being.

While the man and the child sleep, a vast number of wagons, horses, and people approach from the other side of the plain. The narrator describes these people as "nomads" seeking a new home out of necessity rather than out of the pursuit of opportunity. Though the nomads' caravans are loud, the man and the child are so exhausted that they don't wake up. When the cries of buzzards wake the man and young girl up, they find themselves among a rescue party, which leads them down to the caravans.

Seemingly miraculously, the worn travellers are saved from the brink of death by nomads, whom the narrator presents as sympathetic refugees. Ironically, these nomads who save the man and the child also become responsible for their deaths years later.


The man introduces himself as John Ferrier and decides to adopt the child, Lucy, as his daughter. The travellers tell him that they believe in Joseph Smith's teachings and "seek a refuge from the violent man and from the godless." Ferrier correctly guesses that they are the Mormons, and the travellers take Ferrier and Lucy to their prophet, who will decide what to do with them. The Mormons' leader is described as barely 30 years old, with a "massive head and resolute expression." He tells Ferrier that if he does not join them as a true believer, they will let him die in the desert. Ferrier agrees to become a Mormon, and the leader leaves Ferrier and Lucy in the care of the Elder Stangerson, who tells them that the man they had been speaking to is Brigham Young, who speaks with the voice of Joseph Smith and thus the voice of God, and who has made them forever part of their religion.

Mormonism was founded in New York the early 1820s when Joseph Smith claimed to receive visions from angels. Eventually the Mormons moved to Illinois, but tensions rose between Mormons and non-Mormons over the former's polygamous marriage practices, leading Smith's successor Brigham Young to move the Mormons to Utah. The Mormons' claim that they "seek a refuge from the violent man" is ironic, as a number of them later become members of the sensationalized vigilante group, the Avenging Angels, and persecute their own church members. Doyle's fictionalized version of Young in particular presages Mormon violence, as the leader of the Mormons shows that he is willing to let an innocent child and her caretaker die in the name of his faith.


PART 2, CHAPTER 2: THE FLOWER OF UTAH

After a long journey facing "the savage man, and the savage beast, hunger, thirst, fatigue, and disease," the Mormons reach Utah and are told by their leader that it is the promised land. Brigham Young is an effective administrator and oversees the transformation of the land into a settlement and farmland. In the center of the city, the Mormons build a large temple.

Doyle's reference to "the savage man" is likely a reference to Native Americans. That they are lumped together with the likes of wild animals and disease indicates that the natives are viewed as a hostile environmental factor, which both dehumanizes the natives and suggests that they must be treated, however violently, in the same manner as "savage beasts"—thus demonstrating that even before the Mormons have reached their promised land, the seeds of violence have already been sown into their community.

John Ferrier and Lucy accompanied the Mormons all the way to Utah. Lucy had stayed in Elder Stangerson's wagon with his three wives and 12-year-old son, and Ferrier had proven himself as a hunter and guide during their journey. When the Mormons arrived in Utah, Ferrier was given a large, fertile tract of land, though not as large as those of Young and the four elders: Elder Stangerson, Elder Kemball, Elder Johnston, and Elder Drebber. A hardworking man, Ferrier built himself a large log house and improved his lands so that he became one of the wealthiest and best known men in the settlement. He never married, causing some to question his commitment to Mormonism, but in all other ways he followed their religion.

Though Doyle's first reference to Mormon polygamy here is made in passing, his inclusion of Ferrier's decision not to marry into the Mormon community signals Ferrier's tacit disapproval of polygamy. After the Mormons' settlement in Utah, their division of land shows that the community is controlled by an oligarchy. Though Ferrier himself receives land and gains wealth because of his own merits and hard work—resonating with the American meritocratic vision of the self-made man—Young and the Elders' claim over the best and largest pieces of land is a result of their status and power, rather than their ability.


Lucy thrived on John Ferrier's farm and grew into a tall, and strong young woman whose beauty began to attract the attention of men. One day in June, Lucy is riding her horse toward the city on an errand for her father, when she finds her path blocked by a drove of cattle. After trying to push her horse through, she is surrounded by the cattle, one of whom pushes its horn into her horse, causing it to panic. Lucy, fearing she will be thrown down and trampled to death, struggles to hold on until a stranger grabs hold of her horse and guides it away from the cattle.

In some ways, Lucy defies gender stereotypes, as she is a strong, hardy young woman accustomed to physically difficult tasks such as horse wrangling. However, in other respects, Doyle's presentation of Lucy strengthens gender stereotypes. As the main female character in the novel, she is described as beautiful, making her all the more sympathetic when she comes to a tragic end, and yet reinforcing the idea that a woman's physical beauty is necessary to her likeability. Furthermore, when she is drawn into romance for the first time, she is portrayed as a damsel in distress in need of rescue from her suitor, thus implying the dependence of women upon men.

The stranger, a tall, young hunter, recognizes her as John Ferrier's daughter and introduces himself as Jefferson Hope, the son of one of Ferrier's friends in St. Louis. After Lucy invites him to visit the Ferriers later on, they part ways, with Hope now overcome by "wild, fierce passion." As a man "of strong will and imperious temper…accustomed to succeed in all that he undertook," he vows to obtain Lucy's love. Thereafter Hope visits the Ferriers often, telling them about his time in the outside world. Eager for adventure, Hope had taken on many different jobs, as a scout, a trapper, a silver prospector, and a ranchman. Lucy soon falls in love with Hope and, with Ferrier's permission, they plan to get married in two months after Hope returns from his work in the Nevada silver mines.

For Hope, Lucy is his love at first sight. Ironically, the same single-minded tenacity that secures Hope's love is the same tragic flaw that leads him to revenge and to his own death. Hope's adventurous disposition made him highly adaptable, allowing him to take on many different jobs, a skill which he later utilizes in his pursuit of Drebber and Stangerson. The necessity of Ferrier's approval of the marriage is an example of the patriarchal values that the characters hold.

PART 2, CHAPTER 3: JOHN FERRIER TALKS WITH THE PROPHET

It has been three weeks since Hope left, and Ferrier reflects on his daughter's upcoming marriage. While Ferrier is sad to lose Lucy, he is glad that Hope makes her so happy, especially as Hope isn't a Mormon. Ferrier had vowed to himself never to let Lucy marry a Mormon, as he considers the Mormon practice of polygamous marriage to be disgraceful. However, he never spoke of his opinions, because expressing anything that contradicted Mormon doctrine was dangerous. The narrator notes that "even the most saintly dared only whisper their religious opinions with bated breath" and states that "the victims of persecution had now turned persecutors on their own account." The horrific organization that carries out this persecution is, according to the narrator, worse than the Spanish Inquisition, the German Vehmgericht (secret vigilante courts), and Italian secret societies.

The narrator now provides a more explicit explanation for why Ferrier never married. However, his disapproval of polygamy is never expressed in public, for in Doyle's controversial depiction of the Mormon community, there is no freedom of speech or thought. Doyle describes the hypocrisy of the Mormons, who after escaping persecution in Illinois are now persecuting their own community members. The narrator hyperbolically claims that these American persecutors are even worse than the mysterious and bloodthirsty tribunals found in Europe. Whether Doyle is merely sensationalizing history for the sake of effect or tacitly defending European violence is uncertain.

What made this organization so terrifying was its invisible power. People who spoke out against the church would suddenly disappear. As polygamous marriage was considered Mormon doctrine, there were very few adult women available to be married. Rumors floated about immigrants being murdered in nearby camps and women being abducted for "the harems of the Elders." The perpetrators supposedly belonged to the Danite Band, or the Avenging Angels, but no one knew much about the organization or who belonged to it, causing the community to live in fear of their friends and neighbors.

The Mormons' restriction of polygamy to polygyny (in which men would marry multiple wives) is inherently sexist, as women are not allowed to marry multiple men. Their polygyny has a negative impact not only in their own community but in other communities too, as the "Angels" abduct women who are forced into marriage with and likely raped by the Mormon oligarchs. Doyle's controversial account of the Mormons' abduction of women foreshadows Drebber's abduction of Lucy and her forced marriage to him.

One morning Ferrier is about to go out to work when he sees a now middle-aged Brigham Young approaching his house. Though Ferrier greets him politely, the Mormon leader is cold. Young tells Ferrier that he has failed to follow the Mormon religion because he has not taken any wives. However, the reason for Young's visit is actually Lucy, and the growing rumors of her engagement to a Gentile (usually a non-Jewish person but in this context a non-Mormon) that have been spreading. Young cites one of Joseph Smith's rules — every woman "of the true faith" must marry a Mormon, as to marry a non-Mormon would be sinful. Young orders Ferrier to force his daughter to marry the son of either Elder Stangerson or Elder Drebber within a month. Before leaving, Young threatens Ferrier, saying that if he disobeys the "Holy Four," he and Lucy will be left to die in the Sierra Blanca.

Young presents polygyny as an essential part of Mormon faith. When criticizing Ferrier for not marrying and demanding Lucy's marriage to a Mormon, Young inadvertently reveals another facet of sexism inherent in Mormon marriage doctrine. Though Young admonishes Ferrier for not marrying, he ultimately does not press the point. But when it comes to the marriage prospects of Lucy, a single woman, Young threatens her life and her father's life if she does not marry — thereby setting forth a gender ideology that necessitates the attachment and dependence of a woman upon a man, but not the attachment of a man to a woman.

Ferrier ponders how to break the news to Lucy, but she has already overheard Young's orders. Ferrier decides to send a message to Hope that he should return as soon as possible, and tells Lucy that they'll have to raise money and leave Utah in order to avoid the danger of defying Young. Ferrier confesses that he has thought of leaving before, as Young's tyranny nettles him and goes against his identity as a "freeborn American." Trying to reassure his daughter, Ferrier tells her not to worry, but she notices that he locks the doors at night and has taken out his shotgun.

Previously depicted as the archetypal self-made American man, Ferrier is now presented as a "freeborn American" whose values of freedom and independence are at odds with the culture of fear, silence, and control endorsed by Brigham Young and the Mormons (at least as Doyle portrays them, of course).

PART 2, CHAPTER 4: A FLIGHT FOR LIFE

The next morning, Ferrier goes into the city to send his message. When he returns home, he is surprised to see two men in his sitting room. Enoch Drebber and Joseph Stangerson introduce themselves and compare their claims for Lucy's hand in marriage. Stangerson argues that he has the better claim, as he has only four wives compared to Drebber's seven, and says that when his father dies, he will inherit his tanning yard, leather factory, and higher ranking in the Church. For his part, Drebber argues that his claim is stronger, as he can "keep" more wives since his father's mill makes him richer than Stangerson. Drebber claims that they "will leave it all to her [Lucy's] decision," but Ferrier, who is becoming increasingly furious at their presumption, threatens to force them out. The men leave angrily, threatening Ferrier with the power of the Prophet, the Council of Four, and God.

Sexism and hypocrisy permeate this scene, as Drebber ironically and hypocritically claims that he and Stangerson "leave it all to [Lucy's] decision" to choose between them, despite the fact that Young has already threatened her life. Stangerson and Drebber talk about their wives as if they were toys or objects, arguing over who should get Lucy based on how many wives they have already collected. Their presumption is not limited to their unwelcome claims over Lucy, but also extends to their callous consideration of what they will inherit once their fathers die and the blasphemous assumption that they can harness the power of God.


Lucy tries to calm her father down, assuring him that Hope will return soon. In desperate need of advice, Ferrier reflects on their situation, knowing that wealthy men like him have gone missing for much smaller missteps. The next morning when he wakes up, he finds a note pinned to his blanket over his chest, saying "Twenty-nine days are given you for amendment, and then—" Ferrier is shaken by the unspoken threat that has been delivered to him while he was sleeping. The next day, he and Lucy find the number 28 burned into the ceiling of their house. Every day, another number counting down appears somewhere around the house, and despite Ferrier's efforts to keep watch, he is never able to detect the culprit. Ferrier becomes increasingly afraid and haggard, and comes to rely on Jefferson Hope as his last hope.

Not only are these Mormons physically violent against perceived dissenters, but they also use psychological intimidation and threats to terrorize, manipulate, and control their members. As these terror tactics begin to wear down on Ferrier, Jefferson Hope (whose surname is no coincidence) increasingly represents the Ferriers' hope for escape.


The numbers go down to 4 and 3, causing Ferrier to lose all hope in Hope's arrival. Nevertheless Ferrier would still rather die than allow his daughter to be dishonored. On the day a 2 appears on his wall, Ferrier is despairing of what will become of Lucy when he hears a quiet tap on his door. Wondering if it his enemies, he opens the door and is shocked to see a man lying on the floor, sliding himself into the house. When the man gets up, Ferrier is even more shocked to see that it is Jefferson Hope, who tells Ferrier that the house is being watched on all sides, which is why he had to crawl into the house. Now that Hope is here, Ferrier feels better about their chances.

Just as he had shown from his decision to adopt Lucy, Ferrier is a noble man, vowing to protect his daughter at all costs. The presence and absence of Jefferson Hope correlates with the literal hope for the Ferriers' escape. When Hope has been absent for nearly two months, Ferrier begins to lose hope in their survival, but once Hope arrives, Ferrier regains his hope.

While Ferrier prepares his daughter for their journey, Hope packs up the food and water. Hope explains that they would have to leave immediately through the window and walk two miles to the horses. They are walking into the cornfield when Hope suddenly stops Ferrier and Lucy, as two men appear, exchanging secret signals "Nine to seven" and "Seven to five." After the men disappear into the darkness, the three travelers run as fast as they can to the horses and mule and make their way to the outskirts of the Mormons' land. However, a sentinel stops them, and Ferrier claims they had been given leave by the Holy Four. The sentinel says, "Nine to seven," to which Hope responds "Seven to five," satisfying the sentinel, who allows them to pass.

Doyle's inclusion of secret codes reinforces his image of the Danite Band as a secret society whose members could be anyone in the community (and adds to the general sense of sinister mystery appropriate for a Sherlock Holmes story). Fortunately for the Ferriers, Hope's quick thinking allows them to use the codes against the Mormons and escape.

PART 2, CHAPTER 5: THE AVENGING ANGELS

The travelers walk all night and through the next day, making their way through a rocky ravine. Though they see no one else, Hope urges them to continue moving, as their pursuers may be tracking them. The next day their food begins to run out, but Hope, confident in his hunting skills, leaves to find game. After searching for a few hours without success, he catches sight of a bighorn, shooting it down and cutting off pieces of meat to bring back to the campsite. However, he finds his way back difficult, as it is nearly dark. With the thought of Lucy to keep him going, Hope finally recognizes his surroundings and, five hours after he left, nears the campsite.

Hope not only represents hope for the Ferriers but also embodies it, as it is his hope for a future with Lucy that fuels him and carries him back to the campsite. We can guess that this extended absence of his is unlikely to end well, however.

Hope calls out to warn them of his approach, but he hears nothing in return. When he reaches the campsite, he sees no one. Where the fire had been is now a pile of ashes. Hope is confused but recovers quickly from his disorientation. He reignites the fire and examines the campsite. The ground has been trodden by horse hoofs, which turned back to the city. He concludes that men must have taken Lucy and Ferrier with them. Yet not far from the camp is a freshly dug pile of dirt — a new grave. Stuck into the dirt is a stick holding a piece of paper on which was written "John Ferrier, Formerly of Salt Lake City. Died August 4th." Hope checks to see if there is another grave for Lucy, and when he doesn't find one, concludes that she must have been taken back to the city, to be forced into marrying one of the Elders' sons.

The Mormons' intimidation of John and Lucy Ferrier finally escalates into physical violence (though only appearing "off-page"), highlighting the hypocrisy of their original mission to escape persecution and violence. Like Holmes investigating Drebber's crime scene, Hope uses his observation and analysis skills to deduce information about the campsite and about Lucy.

Realizing that there is nothing he can do, Hope wishes that he were dead, but soon abandons his despair in favor of vengeance, as he has nothing else to live for. A tenacious man, Hope "possessed also a power of sustained vindictiveness, which he may have learned from the Indians amongst whom he had lived." He would devote his "strong will and untiring energy" to revenge. Though he is tired, he cooks enough meat to last him for days and begins to walk back to the city. After six days of walking, he reaches the outskirts of the settlement and encounters Cowper, a Mormon acquaintance. Though Cowper is unwilling to be seen talking with Hope, he reluctantly tells Hope what happened to Lucy. Stangerson had shot her father, and she had been forced to marry Drebber. Cowper remarks that she seemed to be on the brink of death.

Before Lucy's death, Hope had been fueled by the thought of a life with her. After Lucy's death, this hope is destroyed and replaced by the desire for vengeance. Like hope, revenge is driven by a goal or desire, but whereas hope aims toward the positive, revenge aims toward the negative. Hope's hope can therefore be said to be perverted into revenge. Hope's single-minded desire for revenge, sustained by his tenacity, is not unlike Holmes' obsession with murder cases. Like Holmes, Hope too becomes obsessed with death.

Hope then leaves for the mountains and lives in the wilderness. Within a month, Lucy dies, perhaps because of her grief over her father or "the effects of the hateful marriage" to Drebber, who only married her for Ferrier's property. While Drebber's wives mourn Lucy, a wild-looking Jefferson Hope barges in, kisses Lucy's forehead, and takes her **wedding ring** off her finger, exclaiming that she won't be buried in it. Hope lives for months in the mountains, occasionally prowling the city and attempting to kill Drebber and Stangerson, who soon discover the identity of their would-be assassin and repeatedly fail to capture him. Eventually the attempts on their lives seem to stop, and the two Mormons believe that Hope has given up.

After her death, the narrator reveals that Lucy's abduction and forced marriage were motivated primarily by Drebber's mercenary interest in her father's land. The practice of financially motivated abduction, rape, and forced marriage has its origins in medieval Europe and objectifies women not only by subjugating their will but also by treating them as property to be stolen. To Drebber, Lucy is little more than a means to steal her father's property.

To the contrary, the need for revenge possesses Hope, whose "mind was of a hard, unyielding nature." Yet Hope is practical and realizes that he will never be able to accomplish his revenge if he continues to starve himself and expose himself to the elements. To regain his health and earn some money, he returns to the Nevada silver mines. After working for five years in the mines, he returns to Salt Lake City and learns that the church has experienced a schism between the Elders and the younger Mormons, many of whom left the church and Utah. Drebber and Stangerson were among these men, but there was no way to track them. Hope, however, still clings to his revenge, and travels from town to town searching for his prey like "a human bloodhound."

Revenge sustains Hope for years. Like Watson's description of Holmes as a foxhound sniffing out clues in a crime scene, Hope is described by the narrator as a human bloodhound, relentlessly tracking Drebber and Stangerson with whatever information he can find. That Hope and Holmes are similarly described points both to their shared cleverness and their preoccupation with death. However, while Holmes is obsessed with solving murder cases, regardless of the victims' identities, Hope is obsessed with committing the murders of his enemies, Drebber and Stangerson.

Years later, Hope finds the men at last in Cleveland, Ohio, but Drebber recognizes him and has Hope arrested by a justice of the peace, giving himself and Stangerson, who is now his secretary, time to escape to Europe. Despite this setback, Hope's hatred continues to drive him. After working to raise enough money to travel to Europe, he arrives at St. Petersburg only to find that the men have left for Paris. Once Hope reaches Paris, the men leave for Copenhagen. Once Hope gets to Copenhagen, the men are already on their way to London.

Though Drebber and Stangerson previous thought Hope had given up on revenge, Hope proves them wrong. Not even the Atlantic Ocean can stop Hope, who chases the men all over Europe, thus concluding the flashback and returning to Watson's narration.

PART 2, CHAPTER 6: A CONTINUATION OF THE REMINISCENCES OF JOHN WATSON, M.D.

The narrative shifts to the present, where Hope is recounting his story. Recognizing his powerlessness, Hope does not resist any further and appears resigned to being arrested. Hope openly admires the way Holmes followed his trail. He calmly lets himself into his own cab, and at Holmes' suggestion, Gregson and Dr. Watson accompany him, with Lestrade driving the cab. At the Scotland Yard, Hope is allowed to make a statement before his meeting with the magistrates later in the week. Hope decides to confess everything right then, and asks Watson to examine his chest. Watson is surprised to discover that the man has an aortic aneurysm, which Hope claims is due to overexposure and malnutrition from his time in the mountains. As Watson confirms Hope's precarious health, Hope is allowed to make a full statement.

Back in the present, Watson is narrating the story again. Now that Hope has achieved his revenge, he is no longer driven by his all-consuming desire (and so seemingly has no real reason to keep going anymore) and calmly accompanies the detectives to the Scotland Yard. It's interesting that Hope and Holmes develop a small rapport here, with Hope admiring the latter's skillful tracking skills. Hope reveals that his pursuit of revenge gradually damaged his health, to the point that he could die at any time.

Hope begins by saying that the men he killed were responsible for the deaths of a father and daughter, and that they therefore deserved to die. Since no one else would have convicted them, Hope decided to take matters into his own hands. The daughter was Hope's fiancée. Forced into marrying Drebber, she died, according to Hope, of a broken heart. After her death, Hope took her **wedding ring**, vowing to himself that it would be the last thing Drebber saw and thought about. Hope pursued Drebber and Stangerson all over America and Europe, a difficult feat as he had little money. When he arrived at London, he found work as a cab driver and eventually discovered that his enemies were staying at a boarding house in Camberwell. However, they cleverly eluded capture, as they never went out alone or in the dark.

In his confession to Holmes and the Scotland Yard detectives, Hope summarizes the events of the previous chapter and argues that his murder of Drebber and Stangerson was just (if illegal). Hope's removal of Lucy's wedding ring is an attempt to invalidate her marriage to Drebber and thus to correct the injustice of her forced marriage. The ring itself serves as a reminder of her tragic death and of his quest for revenge.

One night, however, Hope followed the men from the boarding house to the train station. He heard the men ask for the train to Liverpool, but the next train wouldn't be coming for hours. Drebber decided to go off on his own and stubbornly dismissed a warning from Stangerson, who told Drebber to meet him at the Halliday's Private Hotel. At last Hope had an opportunity to catch the men alone. He had been planning to take Drebber back to an empty house of Brixton Road, and the only problem now was getting him to that house.

After 20 years of tracking his prey, Hope finally has an opportunity to begin carrying out his revenge. Doyle ties up all the loose ends of the story in these sections, revealing the answers to any lingering questions about the murders.

Hope followed Drebber and watched him go in and out of liquor shops before taking a cab back to the boarding house. Hope then saw a young man chase Drebber out of the house for "insult[ing] an honest girl," and Drebber, seeking refuge, got into Hope's cab, asking to be driven to the Halliday's Private Hotel. Hope was elated, as Drebber walked right into his hands. Drebber decided to stop by another liquor shop and told Hope to wait for him outside.

Unbeknownst to Hope, the young man is Arthur Charpentier, who angrily chases Drebber out into the street after Drebber attempted to abduct his sister Alice. Ever the alcoholic, Drebber does not realize the cabdriver's true identity.

At this point, Hope breaks from his narrative, claiming that he did not intended to kill Drebber "in cold blood" and that he wanted Drebber to "have a show for his life." As Hope was once a janitor in a university lab, he had learned about alkaloid poison, some of which Hope stole and made into soluble pills. He began to carry pillboxes with him, each carrying one of the poisonous pills and one harmless pill. He decided that his enemies should choose one of the pills, while he would take the other.

Hope does not kill Drebber "in cold blood," as he wants his death to be somewhat theatrical and suspenseful. Though he views Drebber's murder as "just," he does not seem to accept the idea of justice as being blind or neutral, rather than passionate and personal. Hope's choice of alkaloids to kill his enemies provides symmetry to the deaths of Lucy and John Ferrier, who were killed either directly or indirectly by the Mormons, whom the unnamed narrator at the beginning of Part 2 came to associate with the desert and thus the "Great Alkali Plain."

Returning to his story, Hope claims that he saw John and Lucy Ferrier smiling at him as he was about to enact his revenge. As Drebber was heavily drunk, he did not realize that Hope was bringing him not to the hotel but to an empty house on Brixton Street. Once they made their way into the house, Hope lit a candle, asking Drebber if he recognized him. Drebber was horrified when he realized that it was Hope, who declared that one of them would die that night. Hope claimed that "There is no murder," as "Who talks of murdering a mad dog?" Hope reminded Drebber of his crimes, and held a knife to force him to choose one of the pills from his pillbox. God, Hope claimed, would decide whether Drebber received the poisonous pill or the harmless pill. Hope held up Lucy's **ring** before Drebber's eyes and laughed as he watched Drebber die.

Hope further justifies his murder of Drebber by comparing the former Mormon to "a mad dog," dehumanizing Drebber not unlike Watson did when he portrayed Drebber as "ape-like." Giving Drebber a random choice between poison and a harmless substance, Hope — despite his angry desire to make Drebber suffer the suspense of anticipating his own death — views this as a test of divine morality. When Drebber chooses the poisonous pill, Hope believes that Drebber's death was truly sanctioned by a just God.

During this encounter, Hope's nose had been bleeding, and on a whim he decided to write "RACHE" on the wall with his own blood to throw the police off his trail. Leaving the house in high spirits, he drove away until he realized that Lucy's ring was missing. When he came back, however, he ran into a police officer, but managed to escape by pretending to be drunk. Now that Drebber was dead, Hope's only other goal was to kill Stangerson as well. Early in the morning, Hope decided to climb up to Stangerson's window. Catching Stangerson off guard, Hope described Drebber's death and offered him one of the pills from another pillbox. However, unlike Drebber, who had taken a pill, Stangerson attacked Hope, who then stabbed Stangerson in self-defense. Hope believes that Stangerson would have died anyway, "for Providence would never have allowed his guilty hand to pick out anything but the poison."

Hope confirms Holmes' early deductions that the splotches of blood around Drebber's body belonged to the murderer and that the "drunkard" Constable Rance had encountered was actually the murderer returning to the scene of the crime in disguise. Though Stangerson's chances would have been 50-50 had he chosen one of Hope's pills, Hope chooses to believe that Stangerson's death is sanctioned by God, indicating that he views his revenge in terms of divine justice, not through human conceptions of legality and illegality.

After killing Drebber and Stangerson, Hope continued to drive his cab until a youngster asked for him by name, requesting his cab for a man at 221B, Baker Street. Unsuspecting, Hope arrived at the apartment only to be captured. He remarks to his listeners that though they may regard him as a mere killer, he believes that he is "just as much an officer of justice as you are." When Holmes asks for the identity of the accomplice who retrieved the **ring**, Hope amiably tells him that he doesn't want to get his friend into trouble. Holmes, agreeing with Hope that the friend had retrieved the ring and escaped skillfully, doesn't press the matter. At that point, an inspector announces that Hope must be put in prison, and Watson and Holmes set off for Baker Street.

Hope tells his side of the story of how he was lured by Wiggins, the street urchin, and caught by Holmes, and concludes his statement with his firm belief that by killing Drebber and Stangerson, he was carrying out justice. Though Holmes was Hope's captor, they speak amiably and respectfully to each other, both satisfied with the turn of events — Hope with his success in delivering vengeance and Holmes with his capture of the murderer.

PART 2, CHAPTER 7: THE CONCLUSION

Hope, Gregson, Lestrade, Holmes, and Watson had all been told to appear before the magistrates on Thursday, but by that time, Hope has died from a burst aneurysm. Watson, who saw Hopes body, notes that Hope seemed at peace, with "a placid smile upon his face, as though he had been able in his dying moments to look back upon a useful life, and on work well done." The next night, Holmes wonders where Gregson's and Lestrade's "grand advertisement" will be. Though Watson notes that they had little to do with Hope's capture, Holmes bitterly retorts that perceptions of others' actions matter more than their actual actions. Nevertheless, Holmes is glad to have taken the case, as he was able to solve the case in three days by reasoning backwards.

Hope's death from his aneurysm, which was indirectly caused by his pursuit of revenge, illustrates the dangerous and destructive effects of revenge not only on its targets but also on its agents. As Holmes predicted, Lestrade and Gregson are unjustly awarded credit for solving the case, despite the fact that it was Holmes' superior deductive reasoning skills that led to Hope's capture.

Responding to Watson's astonishment that Holmes found the case "simple," Holmes explains his lines of reasoning about the case from the very beginning. When they first approached the house on Brixton, he deduced the type of cab by examining the road and the murderer's approximate height from the distance between his footprints on the garden path. He came to the conclusion that Drebber had foreseen his death by poisoning by the expression on his face and the smell on his breath. As he had previously revealed, the writing on the wall was clearly a blind. The woman's **wedding ring** convinced Holmes that the murderer was taking revenge for a private wrong over a woman. He also deduced that Hope was red-faced because of the way the blood splatters matched his footprints. Afterward, Holmes inquired into Drebber's background, which Gregson had failed to do, and learned that Drebber had applied for protection against a man called Jefferson Hope, "an old rival in love."

Holmes walks Watson through his thought process for the entire case, reiterating some of his previous explanations and revealing to Watson information he had previously withheld, such as why he suspected Hope had a "florid" face and the information he thought Gregson should have been seeking. As Holmes had said at the end of Part 1, now that he has solved the case, he is now willing to tell all about his investigations — perhaps in order to clarify certain matters for Watson but perhaps also to show off his detective skills.

Holmes had already deduced that the man who walked Drebber into the house was both the murderer and the cab driver, and now he had enough information to enlist his "street Arab detective corp" to find Jefferson Hope's cab. Holmes concludes his explanation by describing his solution as "a chain of logical sequences without a break or flaw." Watson commends his roommate and decides to publish an account of the case so that the public will recognize his talents. Leaving it up to Watson, Holmes expresses neither his objection nor his approval of this, and instead laughingly shows Watson an article in the paper in which Lestrade and Gregson claim credit for solving the case. The story ends with Watson promising to set the public straight with the account of the case from his journal, and urging Holmes to content himself with wisdom from a Horace quote: though he may not be well-regarded by the public, he must be happy in the knowledge of his own talents.

Upon Holmes' completion of his explanation, Watson is (again) astounded at Holmes' skill and greatly admires his roommate, who appears simultaneously annoyed and amused that Gregson and Lestrade have once again bested him in terms of public credit. Indignant, Watson takes it upon himself to correct this injustice by publishing his own account of the investigation, which would reveal Holmes' superiority to Lestrade and Gregson as a detective (and, of course, provide all the material for Doyle's story of mystery and murder).

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