

it! You have brought shame on me for ever! Where are the jewels you have stolen?"

"Stolen!" he cried.

"Yes, you thief!" I shouted, shaking him by the shoulder.

"They are all there. They must all be there," he said.

"Three have gone. And you know where they are. I saw you trying to pull off another piece."

"You have insulted me enough," he said. "I will not listen. I will leave your house in the morning, and make my own way in the world."

"You will leave in the hands of the police!" I cried, half mad with sadness and anger.

"They will learn nothing from me," he said, and I have never seen him so angry. "If you decide to call the police, let them find what they can."

By this time the whole house was awake, and Mary rushed into the room. At the sight of the crown and Arthur's face, she understood the whole story and fell to the floor. I sent for the police, and they arrived quickly. Arthur asked if I intended to let them take him away. I answered that it had become a public matter, since the crown belonged to the country.

"It would," he said, "be to your advantage and mine if I could leave the house for five minutes first."

"Then you could run away or perhaps hide what you have stolen," I said. "You have to face facts. You have been caught in the act, and nothing could make things worse for you. But tell me where the diamonds are. Then I shall forgive and forget everything."

"I have not asked for your forgiveness," he answered, turning away from me. I called the police into the room and let them take him. A search was made, of Arthur, his room, and the house, but the stones were not found.

This morning Arthur was taken to the police station, and I

have hurried here to ask for your help. You can ask for as much money as you like. I have already offered a reward of a thousand pounds. My God, what shall I do? I have lost my good name, my diamonds and my son in one night. Oh, what shall I do!"

Sherlock Holmes sat silently for some minutes, staring into the fire.

"Do you have many guests in your house?" he asked.

"None, except for my business partner and his family, and sometimes Arthur's friends. Sir George Burnwell has been several times recently. No one else, I think."

"Do you go out much?"

"Arthur does. Mary and I stay at home."

"That is unusual for a young girl."

"She is quiet. And she is not very young. She is twenty-four."

"This business was a shock to her too."

"A terrible shock!"

"And you both believe that your son is guilty?"

"I saw him with my own eyes with the crown in his hands."

"That does not really prove anything. Was the rest of the crown damaged?"

"Yes, it was bent out of shape."

"Do you not think that perhaps he was trying to straighten it again?"

"Mr Holmes, thank you! You are doing what you can for him and for me. But what was he doing there? If he had a good reason, why did he not say so?"

"Exactly. And if he was guilty, why didn't he invent a lie? Why did he keep silent? There are several puzzling points about this case. What did the police think about the noise that woke you from your sleep?"

"They thought it might be the sound of Arthur's bedroom door."

"That is not likely. He would not make a noise if he was a

thief. What did they say about the disappearance of the diamonds?’

‘They are still checking under the floors and in the furniture.’

‘Have they looked outside?’

‘Yes, they have examined the whole garden.’

‘This matter, my dear sir,’ said Holmes, ‘is much more complicated than you or the police believe.’

‘You think that your son came from his bedroom to your dressing-room, opened your cupboard, took out your crown, broke off a small piece of it, went off to another place, hid three of the thirty-nine diamonds, and then returned to the dressing-room with the other thirty-six.’

‘But what else is possible?’ said the banker. ‘If he is innocent, why doesn’t he explain?’

‘It is our job to solve that,’ replied Holmes. ‘So now, Mr Holder, we will go to Streatham together and spend an hour looking a little more closely at the details.’

My friend asked me to join them on the journey, which I very much wanted to do. It seemed to me that the son, Arthur, must be guilty, but Sherlock Holmes’s judgement is almost always excellent.

Holmes spoke very little on the way to Streatham. He sat with his chin on his chest and his hat over his eyes, in deep thought. Mr Holder appeared happy with the fresh hope that Holmes had given him. He even talked to me about his business.

My friend only changed when we came in sight of Fairbank, the home of the great banker. He sat up and studied the house with great interest.

Fairbank was quite a large square house of white stone. A wide carriageway led down through the snow-covered garden to a large iron gate. On the right-hand side of this, there was a narrow path which led to the kitchen door. On the left a little road went to the back of the house, where the horses were kept. This was a



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public road, although it was not used much.

Holmes walked slowly all round the house, across the front, down the narrow path, across the garden and into the little road. Mr Holder and I went into the dining-room, and waited by the fire until he returned.

We were sitting there in silence when the door opened and a young lady came in. She was a little above middle-height, with light hair and blue eyes, though these were red with crying. Her face was very pale; even her lips were bloodless.

As she came into the room, she seemed even more unhappy than the banker had been that morning. She went straight to her uncle.

'You have given orders that Arthur should go free, haven't you?' she asked.

'No, no, my girl. The police must be satisfied that he is not guilty.'

'But I am sure he has done nothing.'

'Why is he silent, if he is innocent?'

'Who knows? Perhaps he was angry that you thought he did it.'

'How could I not think that, when he had the crown in his hand?'

'Oh, but he had only picked it up to look at it. Oh, believe me when I say that he is innocent. It is so terrible to think of our dear Arthur in prison!'

'I cannot free him until the diamonds are found, Mary! I have brought a gentleman from London to help me.'

'This gentleman?' she asked, looking at me.

'No. His friend. He wishes us to leave him alone. He is in the road at the side of the house now.'

'In the road? What can he hope to find there? Ah, this, I suppose, is him,' she said, as Holmes came into the room. 'I hope, sir, that you will prove my cousin Arthur's innocence.'

'I share your opinion, and agree that we must prove it,' Holmes said. 'I believe you are Miss Mary Holder. Can I ask you a question or two?'

'Please do, sir, if it will help to solve the puzzle.'

'You heard nothing yourself last night?'

'Nothing, until my uncle began to speak loudly.'

'You shut all the windows and doors the night before. Did you lock all the windows?'

'Yes.'

'Were they all locked this morning?'

'Yes.'

'You have a servant who has a male friend? I think you said to your uncle that she had been out to see him?'

'Yes, Lucy Parr. It is possible that she heard my uncle speak about the crown.'

'You are suggesting that she went out to tell her friend, and that the two of them planned to steal it.'

'But,' cried the banker, 'I have told you that I saw Arthur with the crown in his hands!'

'Wait, Mr Holder. We must come back to that. Miss Holder, did you see this girl return by the kitchen door?'

'Yes, I went to check the door, and I met her coming in. I saw the man, too, in the darkness.'

'Do you know him?'

'Oh yes, he is the man who brings our vegetables. His name is Francis Prosper.'

'He stood,' said Holmes, 'to the left of the door?'

'Yes, he did.'

'And he is a man with a wooden leg?'

Something like fear came into the young lady's eyes. 'How do you know that?' she asked. She smiled, but there was no answering smile in Holmes's thin face.

'I think I would like to go upstairs now,' he said. 'I shall

probably want to look at the outside of the house again. Perhaps I shall look at the lower windows before I go up.'

He walked quickly round from one to the other, pausing only at the large one which looked from the hall to the little road at the side of the house. He opened this and examined it very carefully. 'Now we shall go upstairs,' he said at last.

The banker's dressing-room was quite small and contained only a dressing-table, a long mirror and a grey carpet. There was also a cupboard in the wall. Holmes went to this first and looked hard at the lock.

'Which key was used to open it?' he asked.

'The one which my son spoke about – from the cupboard in the sitting-room.'

'Do you have it here?'

'That is it on the dressing-table.'

Sherlock Holmes picked it up and opened the cupboard.

'It is a quiet lock,' he said. 'I am not surprised that it did not wake you. This case, I suppose, contains the crown. We must have a look at it.'

He opened the case and took out the piece of jewellery. It was a beautiful piece of work and the thirty-six stones were the finest I have ever seen. At one side of the crown there was a bent and broken edge. A point, with three diamonds, had been pulled off.

'Now, Mr Holder,' said Holmes, 'here is the opposite point to the one which has been lost. Can I ask you to break it off?'

The banker took a step back. 'I would not dream of trying,' he said.

'Then I will.' Holmes suddenly tried with all his strength to break the point off, but with no result. 'I can feel it move a little,' he said, 'and I have very strong fingers. An ordinary man could not do it.'

'Now, what do you think would happen if I did break it, Mr Holder? There would be a noise like a gunshot. Are you telling

me this happened a few feet from your bed, and that you heard nothing?'

'I don't know what to think.'

'Did your son have shoes on when you saw him?'

'He had nothing on except his trousers and shirt.'

'Thank you. Well, I think we have had a lot of luck. It will be our fault if we do not succeed in solving this case. With your permission, Mr Holder, I shall go outside again.'

He went alone, explaining that extra footprints might make his work more difficult. For an hour or more he was at work.

'I think I have now seen everything, Mr Holder,' he said, when he came back. 'I shall now return to my rooms.'

'But the diamonds, Mr Holmes. Where are they?'

'I do not know.'

'I shall never see them again,' the banker cried. 'And my son? Can you give me any hope?'

'My opinion has not changed.'

'Then what happened in this house last night?'

'If you can visit my Baker Street rooms tomorrow morning between nine and ten, I shall try to make it clearer. Can I do anything that is necessary to get the diamonds back? There must be no limit to the money I can spend.'

'I would give all my money to have them back,' the banker replied.

'Very good. Goodbye – though it is possible that I may come here again before evening.'

Part 2 The Detective's Solution

Several times during our journey home, I tried to make my friend tell me his thoughts about the case. But he always changed the subject, and at last I stopped asking.

It was before three when we found ourselves in our rooms again. Holmes hurried to his bedroom, but soon returned. He was dressed like a man who might be looking for work, in an old coat and older boots.

'I think that this will be all right,' he said, looking in the mirror above the fireplace. 'I am sorry that you cannot come with me, but I do not think it would be wise. I hope to be back in a few hours.' He cut some meat from the piece on the table, made himself a sandwich, put this into his pocket and left the room.

I had just finished my tea when he returned. He was looking very satisfied and holding an old boot in his hand. He threw this down into a corner and took a cup of tea.

'I am going out again,' he said.

'Where to?'

'Oh, the other side of London. Don't wait up for me.'

'How are you doing?'

'Quite well. I have been out to Streatham, but I did not visit the house. It is an interesting little problem and I am very glad that it came to me. However, I must not sit here talking. I must change my clothes and return to my normal appearance.'

His eyes were shining, and there was even a little colour in his normally pale face. He hurried upstairs, and a few minutes later I heard the hall door close.

I waited until midnight, but then I went to bed. I do not know when he came in, but he was there at breakfast with a cup of coffee in one hand and the newspaper in the other.

'Please excuse me, Watson,' he said. 'I started without you, because Mr Holder is coming quite early this morning.'

'Yes. It is after nine now,' I answered, 'and there is the sound of the bell.'

When the banker came in, I was shocked by the change in him. His face looked quite thin and his hair seemed to be whiter

than before. He walked in a slow, tired way that was even more painful than the violence of his entry the morning before. He fell heavily into the chair which I pushed forward for him.

'Only two days ago I was a very happy man,' he said. 'Now the last years of my life will be lonely and unhappy. One bad thing follows another – my niece Mary has left me.'

'Left you?'

'Yes. Her bed this morning had not been slept in. Her room was empty, and there was a note for me on the hall table. I said last night that I was sorry she didn't marry my boy. Perhaps I was wrong to say that. This is her note:

My dear uncle,

I feel that my actions are the cause of your trouble. I cannot ever be happy again under your roof, so I must leave you. Do not worry about my future, because that is arranged, and do not search for me. In life or in death, I am your loving

Mary

'What does she mean by that note, Mr Holmes? Do you think she might kill herself?'

'No, no, nothing like that. It is perhaps the best possible solution. You are, Mr Holder, coming to the end of your troubles.'

'Ha! You have heard something, Mr Holmes! You have learned something! Where are the diamonds?'

'A thousand pounds each would not be too much to pay for them?'

'I would pay ten.'

'That would be unnecessary. Three thousand will be enough. And there is a little reward, I think. Have you your cheque-book? Here is a pen.'

With a surprised look on his face, the banker wrote a cheque for four thousand pounds. Holmes walked to his desk, took out a

little piece of gold with three diamonds in it, and threw it down on the table.

With a cry of happiness, the banker picked up the broken piece from the crown of diamonds.

'You have it?' he whispered. 'I am saved! I am saved!'

'There is one other thing that you owe, Mr Holder,' said Sherlock Holmes.

'Owe?' The banker picked up the pen. 'Name the amount, and I will pay it.'

'No, it is not money that you owe. Your son is a very fine boy. You should be proud of him, and you must now apologize to him.'

'So Arthur did not take them?'

'I told you yesterday, and I repeat today, that he did not.'

'You are sure of it! Then let us hurry to him. We shall tell him that the truth has been found.'

'He knows it already. I had an interview with him. He did not want to tell me the story, so I told it to him. He had to agree that I was right. He added the few details that were not clear to me. Your news of this morning, however, may open his lips.'

'Then please tell me what this mystery is about!'

'I will tell you, but first I must tell you something else. Sir George Burnwell and your niece, Mary, have run away together.'

'My Mary? Impossible!'

'It is, unfortunately, certain. You and your son did not know the true character of this man. He is one of the most dangerous men in England. He has lost large amounts of money on cards and horses. He is a man without a heart.'

'When he told your niece that he loved her, she believed him. She did not know that he had said the same thing to a hundred women before her. She saw him nearly every evening.'

'I cannot and I will not believe it!' cried the banker, with a white face.



'When he told your niece that he loved her, she believed him.'