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### ANNIVERSAIRE



### Victoria Regina

Le 2 mars 1882, Roderick McLean a tenté d'assassiner « a certain gracious lady » (la reine Victoria). Arrivant de Londres, à sa descente du train, en gare de Windsor, sur le chemin la conduisant au château de Windsor en voiture ouverte, un homme a surgi de la foule et a tiré sur elle avec une arme à feu. Il fut rapidement maîtrisé par deux jeunes élèves de Eton à coups de parapluie, et emprisonné jusqu'à son procès où il fut reconnu fou, et donc « non coupable ». La reine, choquée par ce verdict, fera modifier la loi anglaise pour qu'un accusé puisse être désormais reconnu coupable même quand il est fou. La tentative d'assassinat de McLean contre la reine fut une réaction de colère, car ce poète amateur, ayant adressé une de ses œuvres à la souveraine, fut déçu par la courte réponse qu'elle lui fit. Holmes croise McLean dans *A Study in Midnight*, un pastiche, signé M. Leigh (à lire en cliquant ici), inspiré par la nouvelle de mon camarade BSI Neil Gaiman, *A Study in Emerald* qu'il est conseillé d'avoir lue avant. Vous trouverez sa version française dans le recueil *Des choses fragiles : Nouvelles et merveilles*, paru en 2009 aux éditions *Au Diable Vauvert*. Mais l'IDN est heureux de pouvoir vous permettre de la lire illico en anglais en supplément de ce numéro.



### RATIGAN A PERDU SA VOIX

LE PROFESSEUR RATIGAN du dessin animé *Basil, détective privé* (1986) a perdu sa voix française. Le comédien Gérard Rinaldi est décédé ce 2 mars 2012 à l'hôpital de Briis-sous-Forges (Essonne) des suites d'un cancer, à l'âge de 69 ans.



POUR PARTAGER sa passion pour Sherlock Holmes, avec le plus grand nombre de lecteurs, Kamash propose, gratuitement, au format Epub et pdf, une, je cite, « correspondance fictive mais pertinente, entre Sir Arthur Conan Doyle et le personnage qui l'a rendu célèbre, Sherlock Holmes ». Vous pouvez télécharger ce texte sur le site de *Oxymoron Éditions*, en cliquant ici.

### LE 21 MARS SHERLOCK HOLMES, TOME 2 : ANNÉE 1

LE TOME 2 de la bande dessinée *Sherlock Holmes* de Scott Beatty (scénario) et Daniel Indro (dessin) sortira le 21 mars chez *Soleil Productions*.

Présentation de l'éditeur : « *Le légendaire détective d'Arthur Conan Doyle revient dans une nouvelle aventure explorant ses origines jamais révélées. Joignez-vous au docteur John Watson lors de sa rencontre avec le jeune Sherlock Holmes. Une rencontre qui définira à jamais le destin des deux hommes.* »

*En proie à des meurtres sanglants, Londres a peur. Le Dr Watson réalise que le seul homme capable de faire cesser les assassinats n'est autre que le jeune Sherlock Holmes, un apprenti détective aussi mystérieux que les crimes sur lesquels il enquête.* »  
72 pages - 26,8x17,5 cm - 13,95 €.

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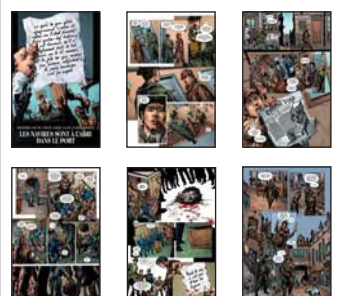
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# THE STAR OF ALBION

Vol 43 No 156. NEW ALBION SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 1914 A DAILY NEWSPAPER FOR ALL CLASSES PRICE ONE PENNY  
PRESENTING THE HUGO AWARD WINNING SHORT STORY

## A STUDY IN EMERALD

Written by Neil Gaiman illustrations and lay-out by Jouni Koponen

### I. The New Friend.

#### THE STRAND PLAYERS

Fresh From Their Stupendous European Tour, where they performed before several of the **CROWNED HEADS OF EUROPE**, garnering their *plaudits* and *praise* with *magnificent dramatic performances*, combining both **COMEDY** and **TRAGEDY**, the Strand Players wish to make it known that they shall be appearing at the **Royal Court Theatre, Drury Lane**, for a **LIMITED ENGAGEMENT** in April, at which they will present "*My Look-Alike Brother Tom!*" "*The Littlest Violet-Seller*" and "*The Great Old Ones Come*," (this last an Historical Epic of Pageantry and Delight); each an entire play in one act! Tickets are available now from the Box Office.

It is the immensity, I believe. The hugeness of things below. The darkness of dreams.

But I am woolgathering. Forgive me. I am not a literary man.

I had been in need of lodgings. That was how I met him. I wanted someone to share the cost of rooms with me. We were introduced by a mutual acquaintance, in the chemical laboratories of St. Bart's. "You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive," that was what he said to me, and my mouth fell open and my eyes opened very wide.

"Astonishing," I said.

"Not really," said the stranger in the white lab-coat, who was to become my friend. "From the way you hold your arm, I see you have been wounded, and in a particular way. You have a deep tan. You also have a military bearing, and there are few enough places in the Empire that a military man can be both tanned and, given the nature of the injury to your shoulder and the traditions of the Afghan cave-folk, tortured."

Put like that, of course, it was absurdly simple. But then, it always was. I had been tanned nut-brown. And I had indeed, as he had observed, been tortured.

The gods and men of Afghanistan were savages, unwilling to be ruled from Whitehall or from Berlin or even from Moscow, and unprepared to see reason. I had been sent into those hills, attached to the \_\_\_\_\_th Regiment. As long as the fighting remained in the hills and mountains, we fought on an equal footing. When the skirmishes descended into the caves and the darkness then we found ourselves, as it were, out of our depth and in over our heads.

I shall not forget the mirrored surface of the underground lake, nor the thing that emerged from the lake, its eyes opening and closing, and the singing whispers that accompanied it as it rose, wreathing their way about it like the buzzing of flies bigger than worlds.

That I survived was a miracle, but survive I did, and I returned to England with my nerves in shreds and tatters. The place that leech-like mouth had touched me was tattooed forever, frog-white, into the skin of my now-withered shoulder. I had once been a crack-shot. Now I had nothing, save a fear of the world-beneath-the-world akin to panic which meant that I would gladly pay sixpence of my army pension for a Hansom cab, rather than a penny to travel underground.

Still, the fogs and darknesses of London comforted me, took me in. I had lost my first lodgings because I screamed in the night. I had been in Afghanistan; I was there no longer.

"I scream in the night," I told him.

"I have been told that I snore," he said. "Also I keep irregular hours, and I often use the mantelpiece for target practice. I will need the sitting room to meet clients. I am selfish, private and easily bored. Will this be a problem?"

I smiled, and I shook my head, and extended my hand. We shook on it.

The rooms he had found for us, in Baker Street, were more than adequate for two bachelors. I bore in mind all my friend had said about his desire for privacy, and I

## A Study in Emerald



Neil Gaiman

forbore from asking what it was he did for a living. Still, there was much to pique my curiosity. Visitors would arrive at all hours, and when they did I would leave the sitting room and repair to my bedroom, pondering what they could have in common with my friend: the pale woman with one eye bone-white, the small man who looked like a commercial traveller, the portly dandy in his velvet jacket, and the rest. Some were frequent visitors, many others came only once, spoke to him, and left, looking troubled or looking satisfied.

He was a mystery to me.

We were partaking of one of our landlady's magnificent breakfasts one morning, when my friend rang the bell to summon that good lady. "There will be a gentleman joining us, in about four minutes," he said. "We will need another place at table."

"Very good," she said, "I'll put more sausages under the grill."

My friend returned to perusing his morning paper. I waited for an explanation with growing impatience. Finally, I could stand it no longer. "I don't understand. How could you know that in four minutes we would be receiving a visitor? There was no telegram, no message of any kind."

He smiled, thinly. "You did not hear the clatter of a brougham several minutes ago? It slowed as it passed us – obviously as the driver identified our door, then it sped up and went past, up into the Marylebone Road. There is a crush of carriages and taxicabs letting off passengers at the railway station and at the waxworks, and it is in that crush that anyone wishing to alight without being observed will go. The walk from there to here is but four minutes..."

He glanced at his pocket-watch, and as he did so I heard a tread on the stairs outside.

"Come in, Lestrade," he called. "The door is ajar, and your sausages are just coming out from under the grill."

A man I took to be Lestrade opened the door, then closed it carefully behind him. "I should not," he said, "But truth to tell, I have had not had a chance to break my fast this morning. And I could certainly do justice to a few of those sausages." He was the small man I had observed on several occasions previously, whose demeanour was that of a traveller in rubber novelties or patent nostrums.

My friend waited until our landlady had left the room, before he said, "Obviously, I take it this is a matter of national importance."

"My stars," said Lestrade, and he paled. "Surely the word cannot be out already. Tell me it is not." He began to pile his plate high with sausages, kipper fillets, kedgeree and toast, but his hands shook, a little.

"Of course not," said my friend. "I know the squeak of your brougham wheels, though, after all this time: an oscillating G sharp above high C. And if Inspector Lestrade

of Scotland Yard cannot publically be seen to come into the parlour of London's only consulting detective, yet comes anyway, and without having had his breakfast, then I know that this is not a routine case. Ergo, it involves those above us and is a matter of national importance."

Lestrade dabbed egg yolk from his chin with his napkin. I stared at him. He did not look like my idea of a police inspector, but then, my friend looked little enough like my idea of a consulting detective – whatever that might be.

"Perhaps we should discuss the matter privately," Lestrade said, glancing at me.

My friend began to smile, impishly, and his head moved on his shoulders as it did when he was enjoying a private joke. "Nonsense," he said. "Two heads are better than one. And what is said to one of us is said to us both."

"If I am intruding –" I said, gruffly, but he motioned me to silence.

Lestrade shrugged. "It's all the same to me," he said, after a moment. "If you solve the case then I have my job. If you don't, then I have no job. You use your methods, that's what I say. It can't make things any worse."

"If there's one thing that a study of history has taught us, it is that things can always get worse," said my friend. "When do we go to Shoreditch?"

Lestrade dropped his fork. "This is too bad!" he exclaimed. "Here you were, making sport of me, when you know all about the matter! You should be ashamed –"

"No one has told me anything of the matter. When a police inspector walks into my room with fresh splashes of mud of that peculiar mustard yellow hue on his boots and trouser-legs, I can surely be forgiven for presuming that he has recently walked past the diggings at Hobbs Lane, in Shoreditch, which is the only place in London that particular mustard-coloured clay seems to be found."

Inspector Lestrade looked embarrassed. "Now you put it like that," he said, "It seems so obvious."

My friend pushed his plate away from him. "Of course it does," he said, slightly testily.

We rode to the East End in a cab. Inspector Lestrade had walked up to the Marylebone Road to find his brougham, and left us alone.

"So you are truly a consulting detective?" I said.

"The only one in London, or perhaps, the world," said my friend. "I do not take cases. Instead, I consult. Others bring me their insoluble problems, they describe them, and, sometimes, I solve them."

"Then those people who come to you..."

"Are, in the main, police officers, or are detectives themselves, yes."

It was a fine morning, but we were now jolting about the edges of the rookery of St Giles, that warren of thieves

## A Study in Emerald



Neil Gaiman

and cutthroats which sits on London like a cancer on the face of a pretty flower-seller, and the only light to enter the cab was dim and faint.

"Are you sure that you wish me along with you?"

In reply my friend stared at me without blinking. "I have a feeling," he said. "I have a feeling that we were meant to be together. That we have fought the good fight, side by side, in the past or in the future, I do not know. I am a rational man, but I have learned the value of a good companion, and from the moment I clapped eyes on you, I knew I trusted you as well as I do myself. Yes. I want you with me."

I blushed, or said something meaningless. For the first time since Afghanistan, I felt that I had worth in the world.

## 2. The Room.

**VICTOR'S VITAE**

Victor's "Vitae"! An electrical fluid! Do your limbs and nether regions lack life? Do you look back on the days of your youth with envy? Are the pleasures of the flesh now buried and forgot? Victor's "Vitae" will bring life where life has long been lost: even the oldest warhorse can be a proud stallion once more! Bringing Life to the Dead: from an old family recipe and the best of modern science. To receive signed attestations of the efficacy of Victor's "Vitae" write to the V. von F. Company, 1b Cheap Street, London.

It was a cheap rooming house in Shoreditch. There was a policeman at the front door. Lestrade greeted him by name, and made to usher us in, and I was ready to enter, but my friend squatted on the doorstep, and pulled a magnifying glass from his coat pocket. He examined the mud on the wrought iron boot-scraper, prodding at it with his forefinger. Only when he was satisfied would he let us go inside. We walked upstairs. The room in which the crime had been committed was obvious: it was flanked by two burly constables.

Lestrade nodded to the men, and they stood aside. We walked in.

I am not, as I said, a writer by profession, and I hesitate to describe that place, knowing that my words cannot do it justice. Still, I have begun this narrative, and I fear I must continue. A murder had been committed in that little

bedsit. The body, what was left of it, was still there, on the floor. I saw it, but, at first, somehow, I did not see it. What I saw instead was what had sprayed and gushed from the throat and chest of the victim: in colour it ranged from bile-green to grass-green. It had soaked into the threadbare carpet and spattered the wallpaper. I imagined it for one moment the work of some hellish artist, who had decided to create a study in emerald.

After what seemed like a hundred years I looked down at the body, opened like a rabbit on a butcher's slab, and tried to make sense of what I saw. I removed my hat, and my friend did the same.

He knelt and inspected the body, inspecting the cuts and gashes. Then he pulled out his magnifying glass, and walked over to the wall, examining the gout of drying ichor.

"We've already done that," said Inspector Lestrade.

"Indeed?" said my friend. "Then what did you make of this, then? I do believe it is a word."

Lestrade walked to the place my friend was standing, and looked up. There was a word, written in capitals, in green blood, on the faded yellow wallpaper, some little way above Lestrade's head. "Rache...?" said Lestrade, spelling it out. "Obviously he was going to write Rachel, but he was interrupted. So -- we must look for a woman..."

My friend said nothing. He walked back to the corpse, and picked up its hands, one after the other. The fingertips were clean of ichor. "I think we have established that the word was not written by his Royal Highness --"

"What the Devil makes you say--?"

"My dear Lestrade. Please give me some credit for having a brain. The corpse is obviously not that of a man -- the colour of his blood, the number of limbs, the eyes, the position of the face, all these things bespeak the blood royal. While I cannot say which royal line, I would hazard that he is an heir, perhaps... no, second to the throne, ... in one of the German principalities."

"That is amazing." Lestrade hesitated, then he said, "This is Prince Franz Drago of Bohemia. He was here in Albion as a guest of Her Majesty Victoria. Here for a holiday and a change of air..."

"For the theatres, the whores and the gaming tables, you mean."

"If you say so." Lestrade looked put out. "Anyway, you've given us a fine lead with this Rachel woman. Although I don't doubt we would have found her on our own."

"Doubtless," said my friend.

He inspected the room further, commenting acidly several times that the police, with their boots had obscured footprints, and moved things that might have been of use to anyone attempting to reconstruct the events of the previous night.

À SUIVRE...