

THE VEXING SEXING



Extra Case #3
by:
Jimi Stine, Caitlin Falls, and
Varsha Prem



EXTRA CASE

A MOST VEXING SEXING

It is an unseasonably steamy day in February when Sherlock Holmes calls the Baker Street Irregulars to 221B. Excitedly rushing up the stairs, Wiggins and all our troop sit down on the sofa in front of the fireplace and patiently await Holmes to begin divulging the details of our latest case. Holmes doesn't often call us to his abode, but when he does we can assuredly anticipate a most interesting day. This time, however, is different.

After rummaging among his various cabinets of curiosities, Holmes gingerly places several petri dishes full of dirt on the table before us as the we looked on, a touch confused. Confusion, though, is a rather common emotion to be felt in the company of Mr. Holmes, and so we wait for his explanation. Holmes begins, "Today, my dear friends, I will instruct you in distinguishing between earth collected from various locations throughout London."

Glancing at each other we attempt to hide our disappointment, surely this must be a ruse of some kind. Having a look at Watson, who is preparing some tea, we receive only a shrug and an eye-roll. "Now," Holmes continues, "every soil has a different composition. Sometimes, the composition will be obvious to the naked eye, due to the variances in colour and texture. However, often a microscope or glass will be necessary. Now~"

Before he can advance his lecture Holmes is interrupted by a frantic knocking at the door, quickly he goes to greet the hurried caller as the we breathe a sigh of relief from the tedium. In comes a disturbed looking elderly woman, arms full of letters and envelopes. She introduces herself as Mrs. Fran Holywell and with some effort drops the stack of stationery on the drawing table, which threatens to give under their weight. Everyone, Watson included, takes a look on the very top of the stack, where there is a large monochrome photograph, the nature of which causes the room to go quiet, save for the crackling from the hearth.

It was a penis. A cock. A dick. Male genitalia. Carefully arranged and signed in an illegible script but addressed solely to "Margaret". Leaning back, none of the irregulars can think of what to say. Dr. Watson is unperturbed by the sight of mere anatomy, and Holmes, always curious, leans closer.

"How fascinating!" he ejaculated.

"I just couldn't take it any more!" exclaims Mrs. Holywell, "I've been receiving these letters in the mail every day for the past two weeks. Until the other day, they were simply poems~ awful ones, but sweet.

"Then this monstrosity appeared on my doorstep, and I couldn't let it go on. I don't for the life of me know who could be sending them. I have a difficult enough time getting around and thought it'd be most efficient to come see you Mr. Holmes, rather than traipsing around to the post offices and so on."

"And you're sure there are no secret admirers of yours out there" inquires Holmes.

"My husband passed away five years ago," she replies "...I haven't seen a picture like that since just before then..." she says, wistfully looking out the window.

"Ahm, how old was your husband when he passed away?" asks Wiggins.

"Ninety-two!" she exclaims.

"Ah," he replies. Taking another look at the letters Holmes asks, "This envelope says 71 Surrey...that's your address, correct?"

"Yes. Well, 71 Surrey Street," she replies.

"Riveting! Just perfect. Thank you so much, Mrs. Holywell, we're on the case." he says, as he hurries her out the door.

"Sherlock!" exclaims Watson. "That was a bit rude."

"I have all I need. Irregulars, you know what to do." A bit dazed by the sudden onslaught of genitalia, we exit the apartment, on the case.

AREA SE

6 SE

We arrive at the stately building, and upon entering we find ourselves in a quiet and dusty office that has as much charm as a bank and post office could possibly muster together. Wiggins pokes his head in the sorting room door and looks around, spotting a woman dutifully sorting through parcels at a breakneck pace.

"Excuse me, ma'am," he asks, "would you happen to have time for a question?"

Without looking up, the woman gives us a single nod.

"If I were to post a letter to 71 Surrey, where would it end up?"

"Well," she replies, speaking as quickly as she sorts, "that would depend on if you were sending it to 71 Surrey Street, or 71 Surrey Row, here in the South East. They're quite different locations." After thanking her Wiggins turns and, making his way briskly for the exit, quips that he knows just where to go.

24 SE

The floors of Reaston and Company are completely swamped with seamen and office-workers alike running about in a tizzy. We manage to get abold of someone who seems more composed than the rest, and ask what's going on. She tells us that the sinking of the Seaward has flipped the firm on it's head, and that if we want answers we'd better just go see John Reaston at his home at 100 Eaton Place over in the South Western part of town.

25 SE

We knock on the door of the journalist's homey apartment, and she peeks through the crack of the open door. Upon seeing us, she closes the door, undoes what sounds like five locking mechanisms, and lets us in. We ask for more information on the Crime Ring victims, on behalf of Scotland Yard, and she divulges their names, under the condition that we not tell a soul

- Leah Spooner, Hugh Ferk, and Das Hagen. She quickly ushers us out, and tells us to be careful.

29 SE

Outside the hospital, the streets are bustling as scores of Londoners are being carried in. From what we can gather a nearby fire has caused serious harm to the neighborhood and its citizens. From the corner of his eye, Wiggins spots a suspicious character amongst the crowd and suggests we follow him. However, the figure slips back into the throngs and we lose him one block east, just north of Archbishop's Park.

35 SE

(LE RING'S RESIDENCE)

Wiggins knocks on the door, and we wait quite a while until it's opened by a butler, who swiftly walks us to a sitting room where we meet a woman all in black. She introduces herself as Madame Le Ring, and explains that she is in mourning. We ask why, and she responds,

"My poor Dick committed suicide just last night, in the Underground. He threw himself in front of a train," she says, weeping a bit. "Apparently it happens often down there, this sort of thing. There wasn't much left of him for the Morgue to go on, but they were still able to identify him as my poor darling Dickie. I have no desire to see the remains, and I should think the funeral will be quite soon."

Wiggins apologetically asks if she knows what might have driven him to suicide.

Mme Le Ring gets a bit defensive, and asks what brings us here in the first place. We reluctantly show her the photos, and she gasps.

"Oh! Yes, that's him, no doubt about it. I admit to being distant recently with my long hours at Selfridges - goods don't just ship themselves you know - but here I thought he was just a touch too lonely. Clearly that was not the case!"

There's an awkward silence as Wiggins searches for a response. In the corner of his eye, he notices an odd ring with an "M" symbol in a box embossed "G & H Jewelers".

"Quite a lovely ring, there. May I ask who "M" is?"
"Oh, thank you. It's, well, a family heirloom of sorts. My mother's name was Mary."

We thank her for her time, and her butler leads us out. "Something doesn't sit quite right with me," murmurs Wiggins, "did you notice the bizarre pattern on the ring? Almost like a key, the way the prongs stood up from it's face."

40 SE

In the lot where No. 40 should be, there is nothing but rubble and ruin. A passerby remarks, "No such luck, gents. Man who lived there had the place demolished just last week. Eccentric bloke, he was."

50 SE

Arriving at the block, we break up into two teams to scout the area for anything that could shed any light into this black hole of disappearances. After a few minutes, we hear a holler from Wiggins' party and run over to see what they've found. On the ground in an ally, they've found a rusted metal hatch with the Undergrounds' insignia emblazoned upon it. Just as we're about to pry it open, we hear the clanging of footsteps from under the hatch, and we press ourselves quickly behind a stack of crates. Out from the shadows appears an incredibly tall man wearing a ring with the letter "A" on it who, after looking around, hurries off with a bad limp.

"Well, how about that. The one and only Roy Obias is playing this little game too. For all his secrecy, his height does make keeping a low profile difficult." Clambering down into the dank depths of the tube, we can see the lights of Westminster Bridge station and turn to head in the opposite direction. At the base of the ladder is a lantern, warm to the touch, which

Wiggins hoists and, after popping a match on his beel, lights. After several minutes of walking Wiggins remarks, "We must be under the River Thames, or even Parliament!" , and indeed, it seemed to be so, as the dipping of water from the ceiling had increased quite noticeably and then receded. Soon thereafter, we notice a small smear of dried blood just beside the tracks, and bending closer discover more, poorly cleaned gore. "I'd say we should have a look around here, then, eh?" says Wiggins.

We inspect the full length of the tunnel, being sure to hide in some nook or cranny whenever a train rumbles through. After a spell, one of our troop cries out, and when we come to see what's been found, we discover a series of marks on the walls. Holding up our lantern, we make them out to be series of letters reading "E A T M E".

"The rings," says Wiggins, "give 'em here." After fumbling about in the dark a few moments we're able to get the rings into the proper openings, but nothing happens. After some trial and error, Wiggins finds a special looking hole underneath the words, and gingerly places a last finger there. Upon doing so we hear a click and the very bricks themselves shudder and give way to our ring-wearing fingers, the condensation on the wall pooling and dripping down to the ground. Behind the wall is a small furnished room. On the table in its center is inscribed "The Esteemed Association for The Masterfully Evil" with high backed chairs ringing it, each labeled with one of the five letters to match the rings.

"Oh my," we remark in unison.

Upon entering the chamber, Wiggins holds his arm across our chests, "Wait!" he cries. "Look at the floor," pointing to the dirt floor and the footprints thereupon. Hoisting our lantern high we see the many prints as well as a reddish-brown spattering on the wall to our left.

"Bloody hell!" an Irregular exclaims.

"Quite so," Wiggins says, "and look there!", he continues pointing again to the footprints, "That there is a woman's high-beeled footprint, just next to where the poor sod was shot." At the back of the room we find a door to another passage that's sealed tight. Wiggins then takes one last look around and proclaims, "It seems like we have everything we need here." And with that, we gratefully exit the horrifying scene.

71 SE (71 SURREY ROW)

We walk up to the opulent mansion belonging to Paul Arbegast, and knock on the door. No one seems to be home, so we decide to have a look around the outer premises. As we come to the back of the house, a stable boy catches sight of us and asks what business we have here.

We ask where the Arbegasts are, to which he replies, "What do you think? The master's at work, and, well, come to think of it, I haven't seen the missus around in a little while. What you need 'em for?"

Wiggins tells him that it's private.

"Like hell! Sneakin' around here and all that," he says, "it's my duty to know!"

We show him the photos, and he says, "Bloody hell. Well, I can tell you where those came from- was the lad across the way there, at 35. Mostly everyone knew what was going on, even Mr. Arbegast, I reckon."

"This young man lives alone?" asks Wiggins.

"Oh no sir, he's married - just saw the lady outside this morning, all dressed in black. Odd, it was."

Wiggins then asks where we might find Arbegast.

"Lloyd's Shipping Registry, shipping subsidiary of the insurance company or somesuch. He's their chief of finances, he is," he says.

Wiggins thanks the young stable boy for his cooperation, and waves goodbye.

90 SE

The leaves have long since fallen from the trees in Archbishop's park, and the general atmosphere is one of desolation. After scoring the park's ample lawns for the better portion of an hour, we're about to throw in the towel when Wiggins spots a black-clad figure making his way out the North gates. By the time we catch up the the shady character, however, disappears as if into thin air.

AREA SW

16 SW

We are unable to actually get into the Parliament building (though that does not stop Wiggins from trying), and so stake it out to sate our curiosity. In our spying, we spot two wealthy looking gentleman walking out and notice that they're wearing peculiar, nearly identical rings, one with an "E", and one with a "T" forged into them. Wiggins recognizes these men as prominent political figures - namely, Norman Potter and Harley Grattan.

28 SW

We arrive at Hugh Ferk's house, and before we can even knock, the door swings open and a rather angry looking young man greets us.

"HUGH THE FERK ARE YOU?!" he exclaims. We desperately try to calm him down, and explain that we just want some details about the murder of Hugh Ferk. The young man then introduces himself as Hugh's son, Auf Ferk. Auf is overcome with anger at the murder of his father: "I can't believe this ferking happened," he continues to yell. "What the ferk would they have wanted with my dad?"

"Do you know anything about the killer? Or the crime ring itself?"

"Well, I can't say I've seen this myself, but I've heard they're all orphans from wealthy estates, and they wear long black cloaks. I'm also convinced they're even in Parliament, those arrogant wankers. I hope you catch those dirty ferkers."

We turn to leave when he adds "Oh, and they all wear these ferking rings with their initials on them. So that when they ferk someone up, the bloke has initials on 'is face and he won't forget who ferked him up".

32 SW

Walking into the post office we are immediately greeted by an exceptionally kind clerk, who chirps,

"How can I help you lot, eh?"

"Well," Wiggins replies, "We've been tasked with finding the proper recipient of these love letters - they're addressed only to a Margaret at 71 Surrey."

"Love letters to the wrong address? Tragic, 'innit? Let's 'ave a look then, yeah?"

Taking a look, the clerk remarks right away that there are two 71 Surreys in London.

"One's at 71 Surrey street, but there's another at 71 Surrey Row over in the South East. Hope that squares things up for ya!"

90 SW

Upon inquiring after the author who supposedly uncovered part of a conspiracy revolving around the recent deaths about town, we are told to wait as the secretary walks towards the back of the building. After some time, we get antsy and decide to have a look around for ourselves. Hearing a few voices beyond a door, Wiggins presses his ear close. After a few moments of listening a shout asks, "OY! Who's 'at?!" Without a thought Wiggins quickly replies, "I think I have a lead on that article you wrote about Spooner's death! Lovely writing by the way, truly a masterful use of the English language if I

say so myself, and I think I should because really it was-"

"How'd you know it was me?" the voice replies, opening the door to reveal his lean and sickly figure.

"I know a true sleuth when I hear one," Wiggins replies. Now out of trouble and with the reporter, Wiggins tells him what we know about Richard Ring. After thinking about this information, the man admits that it does seem peculiar, as Leab Spooner was similarly found dead in the tube, but that he heard she was last spotted having crossed Westminster bridge headed past St. Thomas hospital.

98 SW

"Lovely day for a stroll in the park, eh lads?"

Wiggins asks as we pass from the bustling streets into the peaceful quiet of the park. Making our way round the lake, we spot a lone shack some hundred metres off and head towards it. Marked with the underground's insignia, we know we must have the right shack, but the door is bolted shut. "No matter," says Wiggins, leaning down to pick the lock, "Love me a locked door. Nothing interesting was ever kept behind an open one." In a matter of seconds the door springs open and we enter, Wiggins grinning all the while.

Grabbing a lantern from off a shelf, we make our way down the maintenance hatch. We quickly find ourselves surrounded in a thick darkness, the lantern cutting only a meter or two into it. "Right then," Wiggins says, "let's have a looksee, yeah? Nothin' to worry about down here but trains and rats. Unless we bump into the murderer, that is."

After a minute or two of walking, the light from the lantern catches on the stone all around us and we realize it's glistening with blood. "This seems to be the spot, then," Wiggins remarks coolly.

Having a look around, we find two sets of footprints. "Look there," Wiggins points to one of the sets and holds the lantern over it, "those there are women's shoes, and it looks like our lady was with a rather large bloke as well, certainly bigger than old Dick Ring." After scouring the rest of the tunnel, we come up with nothing else aside from a lone feather that appears to be from a cardinal's carmine wing.

100 SW

At the Reaston residence, we are served what feels like the hundredth cup of tea of the afternoon, but accept it regardless as we sit opposite the old shipping magnate. John Reaston, though robust for his age, is clearly having a rough time of things and asks us somewhat dejectedly why we've come to him.

"Thank-you for speaking with us, Mr. Reaston," Wiggins says, "we understand with the sinking of the Seaward, Reaston and Co. has fallen on rather hard times."

"Ah, yes," Reaston replies sullenly, "I was hoping young lads such as yourselves might be interested in other topics, but yes, I'm afraid we're on our way out the door. Arbegast and his lot have got the market just about cornered now, especially if the rumors about an exclusive shipping deal with Selfridges are to be believed."

"What can you tell us about Paul Arbegast?" asks Wiggins.

"He's damn good at what he does, the man works like a dog. Never known him to be crooked though, if that's what you're getting at. I've heard the rumors of foul play in regards to the Seaward's sinking. I can't say if I believe them or not, but if they're true, Paul played no part in it. He's bloody competitive, but I don't think him capable of sabotage." After forcing down the last few drops of tea, we thank Reaston for his time and wish him well as we leave.

59 S

Approaching the Grigg residence, we notice a man lurking in a nearby alley who dashes off at the sight of us. Our quickest runner peels off around the block, and when he returns, says that all the was able to gather is that the man looked to be Jack Auf Smutts, the legendary smuggler, and that he wore a ring with the letter "E" on it. Ringing the bell, we meet Phoebe, an owlsh looking woman, who at the moment seems to be in a state of immense distress. The sound of exaggerated sobs can be heard in the background. Upon mention of her sister, Phoebe sbrieks and attempts to force us out the door. We quickly explain that we are investigating Dick's murder, and on hearing his name she lets us in. She takes us into a back room, where a beautiful woman sits at a table, clearly the source of the sobbing.

*"Margaret *hic* Arbegast," the woman introduces herself. She looks at the letters and photo, and fresh tears start pouring down her cheeks. "Oh, Dick..." she sighs wistfully.*

We ask her why Dick would want to commit suicide, and she vebemently denies that Dick killed himself. She blames Madame Ring, and thinks he's been done in by her because he discovered their love affair. Now she's too afraid to even set foot back in her own home.

"Love affair?" we inquire.

"Yes, we suspected that Paul and Le were having an affair with one another, on account of their both being away so often. And then there was this note we found in Paul's study."

Join me under There, enter me by
the bridge. I hope you keep in
mind our conversation and that
you shall return to EAT ME this
evening.

"Dick recognized Le's script and decided to follow her when she went out that night, and now..." She bursts into sobs anew, and Phoebe tells us gently that we probably won't be able to get any more information from Margaret at this time.

"What could this possibly mean?" Wiggins asks us, "Under where?"

AREA NW

I NW

The door is flung open wide and a rosy-cheeked gentleman holds his arms out wide, "Master Bateman, at your service!" We inquire after Susan, and the gentleman informs us that she isn't in at the moment, looking slightly disappointed. When we ask if he knows the Arbegasts, he replies that he knows Margaret quite well, as she's there often to spend time with Susan, frequently in the company of the dashing Richard Ring as well.

"She was, in fact, over for supper just the other night, though I do admit she seemed rather nervous," he adds. Thanking him for his time, we part ways.

74 NW

The Selfridges office building is anointed with the most tasteful decor, showing off how sumptuous the department store's stock is this season. Approaching

the front desk, Wiggins asks if a Mrs. Ring happens to work here, and if so, where her office might be.

Without looking up from her ledger, the secretary replies, "Madame Ring is in fact the overseer of all international shipping and sales, and thusly can be seen by appointment only." Looking up from her work, the secretary is clearly taken aback by Wiggins' less than business-class appearance.

"And even if you did have an appointment," she continues, "Madame Ring is on leave for the moment. If you'd like to leave a message for her I can have that arranged."

"That'll be quite alright," replies Wiggins. We take our time leaving the building, and on the way out we happen to notice an office with Le Ring's name on it. Just beyond the window in the door, we catch sight of a wall bedecked with a variety of antique-looking firearms.

"Peculiar, don't you think?" Wiggins asks. An unfamiliar voice says in a hushed voice: "Le Ring is a peculiar woman indeed." We turn to the speaker and come face to face with a young woman, no older than Wiggins himself. After the surprise wears off, Wiggins is able to respond, "And why do you say that?"

"Come with me," she replies, and leads us to an empty conference room where she introduces herself as Polly Oats.

"I began working here just last Autumn, but if I'd known Le Ring was running the show I wouldn't have come near. Now I'm back on the hunt for a position elsewhere. Mrs. Ring, as you might know, is married to Richard Ring, and it was his love that she stole from under me."

"I'm sorry to hear that," is all Wiggins can think to say.

"I know it seems like gossip," she says, "but it's just to say that if you want to know Le Ring, understand that she isn't to be trusted. Not even in the slightest." We nod in understanding and stand to

go when Wiggins turns to ask Polly one last question, "Now, this might be a bit of a reach, but would you happens to know Madame Ring's mother's name?"

"Actually, yes. It was after her that we named one of our most popular chair designs, the Beatrice collection."

"Thank you very much, Ms. Oats, we'll see ourselves out."

82 NW

At the split level row home of the young Polly Oats, we knock, but receive no answer. After a bit, we decide to retreat, but not before discreetly looking through the mail. We find an envelope addressed to Ms. Oats from the offices of Selfridges Department Stores.

90 NW

As we enter the dusty old shop, we note that the sign on the front of Gross & Hankey's is almost completely worn off.

Upon entering, we wake an aging man asleep in a chair, surrounded by gems, magnifying glasses of various sizes, and several copies of some less popular newspapers - *The Pall Mall Gazette* and *The Spectator*.

"Ahem," Wiggins clears his throat loudly. The man twitches slightly, but doesn't awaken. Lying about the shop is a bounty of old jeweller's tools - various metalworking equipment and lenses of different kinds. This man must've been in this line of work for quite a while.

"AHEN, Wiggins shouts, to no avail. Not so typical of a jeweller are the various blueprints that also are scattered about the place, bearing what look like the designs for complex machinery.

"EXCUSE ME!" Wiggins shouts, and at this, the man startles out of his chair.

"Who? What?" he looks around, until he spots us in the entrance. "Oh, customers! Pardon me, pardon me". Wiggins raises an eyebrow. None of the irregulars look even remotely like customers of a jewelry store. The man shuffles towards us, winding his way around the large work tables. "Yes, gentlemen, what can I do for you?"

"We were wondering if you could tell us about a particular ring," Wiggins explains.

"Of course. Is it one that I've made?" asks the Jeweller.

"We believe so, but it might have been quite some time ago"

"Oh, I remember every ring I've ever sold, Mr. Wiggins" The old jeweller says sagely, staring deep into Wiggins's eyes.

"How did you know my--"

"Tell me about this ring, young man." Wiggins is not unperturbed, but he continues on, describing the M ring found at Madame Le Ring's residence.

"Ah, not an old ring at all!" the Jeweller says. "As a matter of fact, I made that piece just a few months ago. I remember it well."

"Do you recall the customer?" Wiggins asks, though he already knows the answer.

"I'm not at liberty to give the lady's name." The jeweller shakes his head disapprovingly. Wiggins has a sudden stroke of inspiration, and decides to take a page out of Sherlock's book.

"Of course. Madame Le Ring will be pleased that you maintained her confidentiality," he says smoothly.

"You know her?" The jeweller looks curiously over the half dozen boys gathered in the shop entrance.

"We're...associates of hers," explains Wiggins.

"Right, boys?" he says, with an edge in his voice.

The rest of the Irregulars nod furiously. "The design is quite remarkable. How did you make it?"

The Jeweller is quite proud of this piece of work.

"Yes, it was quite the task! I could show you my plans, if you like."

"Yes, that would be perfect." Wiggins says. The jeweller shows them several prints of schematics, revealing that five rings were made. The boys spend a good amount of time with him, as the old man goes on and on about the project. "Here!" the jeweler says. "You can have some of my prototypes." He dumps a handful of dull metal rings into Wiggins's hand. "They're not made out of rubies and platinum, but the mechanism is the same!" Wiggins thanks him profusely, and bluffs some more about Madame Ring being ever so pleased.

Before leaving, Wiggins asks, out of sheer curiosity, "Why all the newspapers?"

The man excitedly licks his lips, and explains that he's somewhat of a fiend for conspiracies. "They're all lying to us! They're hiding their dirty tricks, those reporters, and these are the only papers with any real integrity! I read them every day. See, The Times couldn't release the names of these crime ring victims, but the Spectator has real journalists, ones who aren't afraid to get a little dirty to find the scoop- they found out the victim's names! Das Hagen, an ice cream salesman of all people! Not to mention L. Spooner, and Hugh Ferk! Isn't it thrilling, finding out the real truth? It's my true passion, besides jewel-work, that is."

Wiggins bids the man goodbye before he can continue raving about the joys of conspiracy theories.

AREA WC

6 WC

The West Central post office is perhaps the smallest we've ever seen. It appears all but forgotten about. At the front desk is a stout man, furiously scribbling away in a ledger, who, without looking up, asks "What is it?" Attempting to appease the already perturbed postal officer, Wiggins asks in his sweetest

voice, "We were wondering, sir, if you could help sort out a bit of a mix up?"

"We don't make mistakes here, young man," the clerk replies.

"Well then," says Wiggins, "why on earth was this sent to a little old lady in your district?" And with that, Wiggins places the lewd image directly on the man's ledge. At the sight of the detailed anatomy, the clerk sights bolt upright and, stammering, says, "B-blimey, she's a dirty old broad!"

"They weren't for her!" cries Wiggins.

"Let me have a look, then," the clerk replies, struggling to put on his glasses and taking a look at the envelope, "Well there's the rub," he continues, pointing to the address, "there's another 71 Surrey down in the South East. Take this filth there!"

12 WC

As soon as we enter the Investigation Department, it becomes clear it is indeed no post office, and instead bears much more resemblance to a police station, and is simply focused on maintaining the security and fidelity of all the mail floating around London. Taking all this in, Wiggins saunters up to the receiving clerk and asks if they might be able to help us sort out a case of mixed mail. The clerk, clearly disinterested, tells us matter of factly to have a seat and wait to be helped. After an hour of twiddling our thumbs, the same clerk sets down his pen and motions for us to return.

"What is it you need, then?" his voice is as monotone and bland as his demeanor.

"Well, it would be easier to show you," replies Wiggins, who then brandishes the illicit photo to the clerk, "this was sent to the wrong woman." For the first time, the clerk shows any sign of emotion, as his eyebrows seem to attempt an escape off the top of his high forehead.

"My goodness! That was entirely unnecessary, young man- I simply need the address."

Showing him the envelope, the clerk examines the writing, and after a few moments of regaining his composure, states in his flat voice, "This, my friend, is the work of an imbecile. There are two 71 Surrey's in this town: Surry Row in the South East, and Surrey Street in West Central."

73 WC

Upon entering the seedy establishment, our attention is immediately drawn to the stage set up along the back wall. On display there are a pair of hand-puppets speaking unintelligibly to one another, and before long one is bashing the other over the head with a wooden spoon, sending the bar patrons into uproarious laughter. "I haven't seen old Punch and Judy since I was just a lad- certainly unexpected at a place like this," Wiggins says with a smile. We make our way to the barkeep and ask if he doesn't mind us asking him a few questions. After we pass along a few quid, he agrees to hear us out.

"You used to have a pretty steady patron here by the name of Das Hagen, correct?" Wiggins asks.

"Yeah, 'as right," replies the keep, "used to come in 'ere couple times each week. Loved the bloody fella till 'e got 'isself killed."

"You have any idea how that happened, gov?"

"Whadda you fink? He got his nose a lit'le too dirty, pissed off the wrong people an' 'at was 'at." As Wiggins opens his mouth for another follow up question, a rough looking gentleman at the bar speaks up and says he knows what happened.

"Me and Hagen used to do business together, he was like a bruvva to me he was." With breath redolent of more than a few beers, the stranger

tells us of Das Hagen's involvement with the crime ring that's been terrorizing London.

"One night he told me he was off to Parliament, but I had no idea why. Poor bloke was no politician, I can say that much. Next day he turn up dead in the Thames. I miss him I-" At this point the big man is close to tears and the barkeep takes him to the side, motioning for us to get lost. As we leave we can see him caressing the thug gently as he weeps.

71 WC

We get to Fran Holywell's quaint home, and she lets us in, taking her sweet, sweet time preparing some tea, and insisting we stay for biscuits as well. She asks if we'd like to see her photo album of children and grandchildren. We can't say no. Flipping through it, we catch sight of something that looks a bit familiar, and press her to flip to the back, which she does without question. A letter. A dirty letter. Several of them, in fact. "Well, I kept some of the better ones for myself..." she mumbles. Holding one to the light Wiggins begins reading under his breath, "Dearest Margaret, I long to whip you tirelessly, as if you were the purest of creams- smooth and white and delicious, I'd drink you and flush you from my uncontrollable..." Trailing off, we all agree Wiggins has read enough. None of the other letters reveal anything new, but our perception of the kindly widow will never be the same. Somewhat uncomfortable, we finish our biscuits and find an excuse to leave.

75 WC

We enter Ortner and Houle's jewellers, where we are clearly not welcome. The appearance of a ragtag group of scruffy young men in a jewellery store is enough to put everyone on edge. After an annoyed exchange with the shop attendant, we are taken to see the lead jeweller, who tells us that he has never made a ring for Le Ring.

"She bought a lovely necklace from us a few years ago, though! Made quite a splash at the 1885 Seaman's Charity Ball!"

We leave the shop hastily.

79 WC

The immaculately dressed Norman Potter, MP, is just stepping out of his coach as we approach his stately residence. This close to him the brilliant plumage sprouting from the band of his hat is quite noticeable. Without even casting an eye towards our advancing selves he remarks, "I've no time for conversation, lads." Despite our best efforts to get a word out of the politician, nothing cracks him as he makes for the door. That is, until Wiggins asks "What's the 'T' on your ring for, eh?" With his key half inserted, Mr. Potter whirls around and says, "Young men like you need to stop sticking your noses where you shouldn't. Your lot have caused me quite a few headaches these past twenty-four hours, now bugger off!" And we do.

81 WC

We arrive at the old engineman's abode and knock. After a minute or two, the door opens and we're face to face with the ageing Mr. Von Bork. We tell him that we're looking into the death of Richard Ring, and ask if he would answer a few of our questions. Somewhat reluctantly, he lets us in.

After getting situated with Pörk, the teacup pig, on his lap, Wiggins pipes up.

"We're truly sorry to be asking calling these memories back to you, but what can you tell us about the events of February 11?"

After a long sigh the retired conductor replies, "I was nearly at the end of my route. Nearly the end, you see? Oh god..." and he trails off. Gently, we press for more information,

"Could you continue?" asks Wiggins, "What happened exactly?"

Von Bork meets our eyes for the first time and states emphatically, "I'll tell you what happened! The boy was already dead! I know it!" Leaning forward in his seat, Wiggins presses for details.

"I didn't kill him..." Von Bork says, looking distant again, as if imagining the gory scene, "he didn't kill himself... the body was already strewn across the tracks. I could see it in the light of the train and I swear I saw blood across the timbers. I'm sure of it."

"But how could that be? Surely you would have seen anyone traipsing through the tunnels, right?"

"Don't be so naive, lad," Von Bork replies with a grim chuckle, "lots of nefarious things happen in the Underground. I dare not recall all that I've witnessed in those tunnels."

"Can you tell us where on the line this happened?"

"It was just past the Saint James Park station that he was struck. I'll never set foot near that station again." Leaning back in his seat Wiggins asks one last question, as nonchalantly as possible.

"Could you, ah, perhaps tell us how one might get to such a location without attracting a wandering eye in such a busy part of town? Purely for speculative reasons of course." Sensing the matter afoot, Von Bork gives his reply some thought, but speaks up anyway, "Well, there's a maintenance hatch in the dead center of the park in a small shack. We often use it to inspect the switches and such for the station."

"Thank you for speaking with us, Mr. Von Bork, we know this must be rather disturbing for you," replies Wiggins.

"Just find whoever's responsible, chaps," Von Bork says with a sigh, "please."

AREA EC

16 EC

We find Paul Arbegast amongst the rowdy crowd, and he seems to have already had a drink or two, by the looks of him. There's a sadness in his eyes. We sit down next to him, and say,

"We've been employed to investigate a photo that lead us to Richard Ring. Do you know him?"

"Oh, yes, he's that handsome bastard across the way. What of him?"

"He's been found dead, and we suspect foul play."

"Good heavens, the poor bloke! But what does this photo you've mentioned have anything to do with it?"

We show him the photo, and tell him that it, along with love poems, were sent to his address.

"God... they must be for my Margaret!" After taking a swig of his drink Arbegast runs his hands through his hair and continues, "I should've known better than to trust a damn stable hand to keep an eye on that woman! And you say this wanker's dead?"

"It was originally thought to be a suicide by way of train, but we've got a funny feeling about this one. It was your stable hand, actually, who tipped us off."

"He is a chatty one, that boy. I have heard that throwing oneself in front of trains has become more common as of late.."

"We've also heard that Mrs. Arbegast hasn't been around in a short while."

"I admit, I was at the office all night, what with the sinking of the Seaward and all, so I wouldn't know where she's been. She has been known to visit with her sister, Phoebe Griggs. She might also be at her bosom friend's, Susan Bateman. Or maybe she's already found some other man to cheat on me with." Wiggins takes note, and remarks, "Your company made out quite well on the sinking of the Seaward, eh?"

"Yes, well, unfortunately, we have. Our company was built up alongside those chaps and now we'll undoubtedly monopolize the market. They were hanging by a thread as it was, and it seems it finally gave on them. I'm not going to complain about making money, but definitely was a tragedy that happened to old John."

"John... Do you mean John Reaston?"

"Yes, the salty old bastard at Reaston and Co.," he says, wistfully stroking his moustache. "We've been rivals for years, me and him. I suppose the universe has a twisted way of smiling on me, doesn't it?"

"So it does. We've heard that some suspect foul play in the sinking of the Seaward - are you aware of this?"

After staring out the window for a moment, Arbegast takes a long gulp of his drink, a deep breath, and lets the cat out of the bag.

"Alright, alright. Le Ring told me she wanted to make me a private business partner, and exclusive shipper of her goods from Selfridges. She said she knew people in high places who could help my business vastly improve. I told her it was certainly an attractive proposition, but that I wasn't sure exactly how these people intended to do so. Once I heard about the Seaward sinking, I knew it had to be her doing."

We thank him for his help, and he orders another round of drinks as we leave.

17 EC

The clerk at the front desk of Lloyd's Shipping Registry is just donning his top-coat as we enter the bustling office. When we ask him if Mr. Paul Arbegast is in, he responds that Mr. Arbegast is uncharacteristically out for a drink at the nearby Appenrodt's German Restaurant. He himself is heading out to lunch, and asks if we have any more questions before he goes.

"Not but one, sir," replies Wiggins, "what's all the commotion going on around here?"

"You haven't seen the papers?" the clerk responds, affixing his hat, "The Seaward's sunk- on her maiden voyage no less. The Times says it was an accident just out of the harbor, but some boys around the yards have been bearing rumors of foul play. Poor old John is just about done for either way I reckon."

"John?" Wiggins queries.

"John Reaston, of course," he answers, ambling for the door, "the president of Reaston and Co.. They are, or rather, were, our only other competition. Sad to see the old man down and out, but he's had a good run of it. Now, I'll be off then."

18 EC

The manufacturing magnate's vast home is entirely unlit as we approach, and pounding the door with its heavy knockers doesn't change that. After a few moments of waiting, however, a window over our heads opens and a small balding man, presumably a member of the help, pokes his head out the window simply to tell us, "Sod off you urchins," before slamming the window back into place.

19 EC

As soon as we turn onto Leadenhall Street, one of our troops remarks that we better be quick. Wiggins begins to ask why, but quickly notices the sideways looks we're getting from all the men and women of this esteemed block. We knock on Grattan's large mahogany door regardless, but no one answers. Things don't get any more friendly as a woman starts whispering in the ear of a bobby and pointing to us. We hadn't done anything wrong, but decide not to stick around anyway.

20 EC

We arrive at the Hagen's humble abode and find the German ice cream magnate's home empty, but unlocked. Not wanting to miss a thing, we have a poke around. The rooms themselves are freezing cold, and various colors of cream is dripping about everywhere. Looking around, we find little, aside from a receipt for an incredible amount of cream and sugar, to be distributed to nations across the globe. "Well, he's simply creaming all over the place, isn't he?" remarks Wiggins.

In another drawer, we find personal receipts, which Hagen keeps in immaculate order. We find several handwritten receipts for a bar called Punch and Judy, an unusually seedy bar for a man of Hagen's wealth.

Taking a few tasting samples for ourselves, we pocket the receipts and leave the residence.

32 EC

Leonard Spooner's butler opens the door and lets us in. Poor spooner is bedridden, distraught after his wife's death. In his bed, he is curled up in the fetal position. He responds to Wiggins' questions about Leah Spooner's death by asking Wiggins to come closer and closer until he pulls Wiggins onto the bed with him, and asks him to spoon. He tenderly whispers some information into Wiggins' ear, which Wiggins later repeats to us: "I think Leah was murdered by the organization we used to be a part of, their leader is a very formidable person, we were never allowed to meet them: seven feet tall, wearing a cloak made of night, they only sleep for one hour per day. They wear a ring with an M on it, but nobody know what it stands for. My w-wife was last seen near the leader's secret hideout, heading for the entrance north of Archbishop's park". Wiggins gingerly gets up, and we leave the residence more perplexed than we were upon entering.

38 EC (MORGUE)

When we arrive at the morgue, an annoyed looking man meets us at the door. He is reluctant at first, but after some very ardent convincing on the part of Wiggins, he lets us in to see the body, or rather, what remains of it. It's been positively eviscerated - where his face should be there is instead a fleshy cavern, his arms are missing, and one of his legs as well. His torso has also taken considerable damage.

"Never seen anything like it!" the morgue attendant ejaculates.

"Really?" Wiggins exclaims. "I would have thought you would have seen bodies in much worse condition than this"

"Oh, of course. I've seen a body put through a meat grinder" the attendant says. "I'm referring to this."

He pulls the sheet entirely off the body, and we find one part of the body that has taken no damage whatsoever. The body's genitals are standing at full attention. We hold up our pictures of Dick Ring's member, and confirm that these two are one and the same.

We notice something odd on his neck and chest, though. A spattering of red marks. His face is gone, but he has small burns down his front and neck, and the morgue attendant brings out his shirt, which has pinhole burns all down the front.

"It's probably brake dust, though the placement is oddly specific. Only other thing it could be is shotgun residue."

51 EC

After walking up and down the street for several minutes, we are finally able to locate the clandestine journal's headquarters, marked only with a small "S" carved in the door. We knock, and immediately a slot at head height opens, revealing a pair of bloodshot eyes.

"What do you want?" murmurs the voice, "Who are you?"

"We just wanted to ask a few questions about this crime ring you've uncovered. We're the Baker Street Irregulars"

"Oh, well if I'd known you were Holmes' boys..." as he trails off, the voice is replaced with the sound of locks coming undone for several moments. The stooped man says he can't keep us here long, but that he'll hear us out. After telling him what we know, we show him the rings, and ask if they look familiar.

"Bloody hell, they look just like one found where Terk was killed. Quite the crime scene that was, I assumed it was his, but know...perhaps his killer's. Yes, yes." The man hurries over to his desk piled high with newspaper clippings and finds what he's looking for, "But that ring," he continues, "had an 'A' on it. Whoever it belongs to is likely still feeling the effects of that struggle."

93 EC

Nailed to the door of the post office is a simple note with a large handwritten message.





QUESTIONS

PART ONE

1. Who sent the love letters?
2. Who murdered Richard Ring?
3. Why was he killed?
4. Why did Fran Holywell receive the letters?
5. What is the name of the crime ring that has been terrorizing London?

PART TWO

6. Why was the *Seaward* sunk?
7. Who are the 5 members of the Crime Ring?
8. Why was there a feather in the Underground?
9. What does Le Ring collect?

SOLUTION

Holmes sits in his chair, hands steepled under his chin, watching us Irregulars compare our many notes. Finally, he breaks the silence, and says,

"Ahem. It was clear from the very beginning of the case that the death of Richard Ring was not a suicide, but a murder - we could tell from his love letters and his, ahem, erotic photographs, that he was certainly enamoured with a woman, and therefore had something worth living for. It was unlikely that Madame Le Ring would be unaware of his infidelity - sending love notes through the post doesn't allow for excessive discretion.

Now, as for the culprit. Our main suspects at this point are the scorned wife, Madame Le Ring, his paramour's husband, Paul Arbegast, and, though somewhat less likely, the crime ring mentioned in the Times, which operated in the Underground. Our victim may have stumbled upon some secret meeting and gotten himself killed.

"But why would he be in the Underground in the first place?" asked Watson.

"A very good question, Watson. Visiting Margaret Arbegast at the Griggs residence revealed that the two forbidden lovers were also suspect of Madame Le Ring and Paul Arbegast's fidelity, considering their unusually late working hours. In order to find out the truth, Paul decided to follow Madame Le Ring to her secret meeting - which led him to the Underground.

"But, Holmes! Why would they meet for a rendez-vous in the tube tunnels?"

"Another astute question, Watson," replied Holmes. "You see, Mme Le Ring and Arbegast weren't lovers - in fact, Paul Arbegast is free from blame. However, Madame Le Ring, as you may have guessed, is a powerful member of the crime ring. Once she arrived at the meeting of E.A.T.M.E., her follower was discovered, and therefore murdered, before she even realized that it was her own husband. To dispose of the body, members of the ring threw him onto the tracks in a cover-up suicide..

SCORE PART ONE

1. Who sent the love letters? Richard "Dick" Ring
2. Who murdered Richard Ring? His wife, Mme Le Ring
3. Why was he killed? He discovered Le Ring's involvement in EAT ME
4. Why did Fran Holywell receive the letters? Their addresses are both 71 Surrey.
5. What is the name of the crime ring that has been terrorizing London? EAT ME

PART TWO

6. Why was the *Seaward* sunk? Le Ring did it to show Paul Arbegast her power
7. Who are the 5 members of the Crime Ring? Le Ring, Norman Potter, Harley Grattan, Roy Obias, J.A. Smutts
8. Why was there a feather in the Underground? It fell from the hat of Norman Potter.
9. What does Le Ring collect? Antique Guns



BELOVED CONDUCTOR RETIRES

Jörke Von Bork, a local legend and beloved train conductor, has retired after thirty-five years of service. A kind man, Von Borke began conducting when he was only seventeen, and quickly became an icon of the London Underground. His retirement comes a few days after his first ever accident, after which he claimed he, "could never operate a train again". He now enjoys time at home with his wife, Björk, and teacup piglet, Pörk.

POSSIBLE LONDON CRIME RING

By Freddie Hoare

Esteemed detectives from Scotland Yard have uncovered a possible crime ring in London. Four murders previously thought unrelated were found to have been committed by a common perpetrator, or group of perpetrators. Names of the victims cannot be released publicly at this time, due to the ongoing situation. Any cause for suspicion or possible information should be reported to the author.

LOADS OF SEAMEN SUDDENLY DISCHARGED

Disaster struck the local harbor as the departure of brand new Charter ship "The Seaward" departed from the docks. As The Seaward attempted to pull out of the harbor, it rubbed against the edges of the dock, agitating just the right spot. A shudder ran through it, and a large load of seamen was expelled. The slick shores were just COVERED in the poor, wrigglers. John Reaston, president of the long floundering Reaston and Company shipping has said, "We will not remain flaccid in this situation. I cannot deny the setback this tragedy has caused, but Reaston and Company shall persevere through it all."