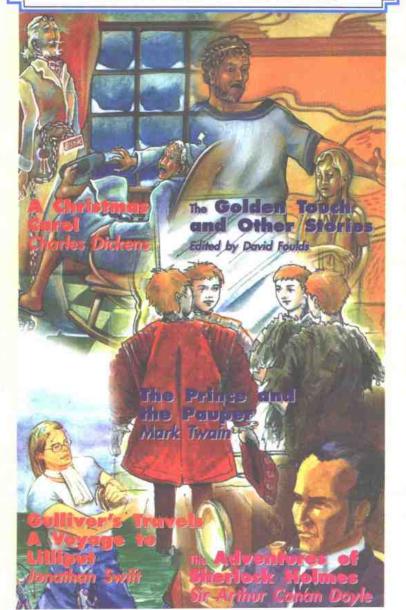


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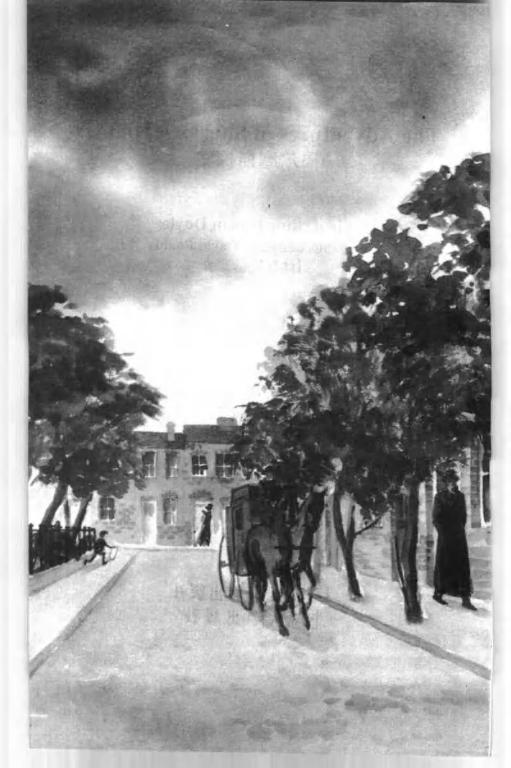
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The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes 福尔摩斯探案

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Syllabus designer: David Foulds [注释] 张 力

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The aventures of aerlock Holmes

oir Arthur Conan Doyle

WATCHES JABEZ-WILSON

Oxford University Pres

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The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

福尔摩斯探索

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THE DANCING MEN

Chapter One

Holmes sat quietly for a long time, studying something in a glass bottle.

'So, Watson,' he said suddenly, 'you are not going to buy any land in South Africa?'

I was very surprised by his

question.

'How do you know that?' I asked.

He turned around on his chair, holding a magnifying glass in his hand. He had a little smile on his lips.

'Are you very surprised, Watson?'

'Lam.'

'I should make you write that down on a piece of paper.'

'Why?'

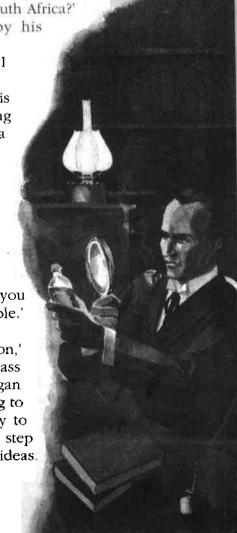
'Because in five minutes you will say that it is very simple.'

'I am sure I will not.'

'You see, my dear Watson,' - he put the magnifying glass back on the table and began to talk like a teacher talking to his class — 'it is very easy to arrive at an idea, step by step from a number of other ideas.

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Each one takes you on to the next. But when you just look at the first idea and the last one, the result may seem surprising. I noticed the chalk mark at the bottom of your left thumb. I was sure, then, that you are *not* going to buy any land in South Africa.'

'I don't understand.'

'Let me show you. One, you had chalk between the thumb and fore-finger of your left hand when you came in last night. Two, you always put chalk there when you play billiards. It helps you hold the billiard stick. Three, you only play billiards with Mr Thurston. Four, you told me four weeks ago that Thurston wanted to sell you some land in South Africa. Five, your bank book is locked in my drawer, and you have not asked for the key. Six, so you do not need any money, and therefore you are not going to buy the land from Thurston!'

'Why, how simple!' I said.

'Yes, isn't it?' Holmes replied. 'Every problem becomes very simple when you understand it. Now, here is another problem for us to explain. What does this mean, Watson, my friend?'

A strange puzzle

Holmes gave me a piece of paper, and turned back to look at the bottle on the table. I looked at the piece of paper. It contained a row of strange drawings. 'Why, Holmes, these are a child's drawings!' I said.

'Oh, that's your idea, is it?'

'What are they then?'

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'That is what Mr Hilton Cubitt, of Ridling Thorpe Manor, Norfolk, wants to know. He sent that piece of paper to me in the post, and is coming by train to see me. Listen. Someone is at the door now, Watson. It is probably Mr Cubitt.'

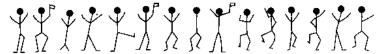
We heard someone walk up the stairs, and then a tall man came into the room. He had clear eyes and healthy skin and looked like a man who lived in the country. He noticed the strange piece of paper he had sent us, lying on the table.

'Well, Mr Holmes, what can you tell me about these?' he asked. 'I know that you like puzzles. I don't think you will find a puzzle stranger than this one. I sent these drawings to you in the post so that you could study them carefully before I came.'

'Yes, these are very strange, Mr Cubitt. They look at first like the work of a child. But why do you think they are so important?'

'I don't, Mr Holmes, but my wife does. She is very frightened. She says nothing, but I can see it in her eyes. That's why I want to know what the drawings mean.'

Holmes held up the paper with the light behind it. It was a page of writing paper, and the drawings on it were done with pencil. They looked like this:



Mr Cubitt's promise

Holmes looked at the paper for some time. Then he put it inside a book on his table.

'This is going to be very interesting,' he said. 'You didn't tell me very much in your letter, Mr Cubitt. Please tell my friend Dr Watson and me everything you know.'

'Well, you see,' Mr Cubitt began, 'the story begins last year, when I got married. I'm not a rich man, Mr Holmes. But my family have lived at Ridling Thorpe Manor for hundreds of years. Our family is very well

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known in Norfolk. Last year I came down to London for a visit, and I stayed at a small hotel in Russell Square. I met a young American lady there, called Elsie Patrick. We became friends, and a few weeks later I asked her to marry me. We returned to Norfolk as husband and wife.

'Perhaps you think I was foolish to get married so quickly. I didn't know anything about my wife's family or what she had done before I met her. But if you meet her you will understand. She was very honest about it. She told me she wished to forget something. She said that she didn't want to talk about her family ever again. And she said that if I married her, I must never ask her about her past life. I loved her, Mr Holmes. I was happy with this and promised to do what she asked.

'Well, we have been married now for a year, and we have been very happy. But about a month ago, at the end of June, trouble started. One day my wife received a letter from America. I saw the American stamp on it. When my wife read the letter, her face turned white, and she threw the letter into the fire. She never spoke about it. But since then she has been frightened and worried. I have not asked her about it, because of my promise. Until she speaks about it to me, I can say nothing about it to her.

'About a week ago, I found some of those strange little dancing men, like these on the paper, drawn on the window. I thought that someone had drawn them there for fun, so I washed them out. When I told my wife about them, she looked very worried. She asked me to tell her if I found any more. Then yesterday morning, I found this piece of paper in the garden. I showed it to Elsie. When she saw it, she became quite ill. That was when I wrote to you, Mr Holmes. I didn't

want to call the police, because they would only laugh, I'm sure. Please help me, Mr Holmes. I am not a rich man. But I will do anything to make my wife happy again.'

Holmes will help

Mr Cubitt was an honest and simple man. Holmes saw that he loved his wife very much. After saying nothing for a few minutes, Holmes spoke.

'Mr Cubitt. Why don't you ask your wife to tell you what her secret is?'

'I can't do that, Mr Holmes. As I said, I have made a promise, and I must keep it. If she wants to tell me, she will. But if not, I must do what I can without her help.'

'Then I will help you, Mr Cubitt. First, have you seen any strangers near your house in the last few weeks?' 'No, I don't think so.'

You live in a very quiet part of the country, don't you? So you should know if any strangers have arrived."

'Yes, but there are many small hotels in the nearby villages. And sometimes people stay with the farmers.'

'These strange drawings have a meaning. But I can't tell you what they mean from just this letter. I must see more. I want you to go back to Norfolk, Mr Cubitt. Watch carefully for any more dancing men. Ask if there are any strangers staying near you. When you have something new, come to me again. That is the best I can do for you now. But I am always ready to help you if you need me.'

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Chapter Two

Sherlock Holmes was very quiet for the next few days after the meeting with Mr Cubitt. I saw him take the piece of paper from his book many times and look carefully at the pictures of the dancing men. But he said nothing about it to me until about two weeks later. I was going out when he called me back.

'Please stay here, Watson.'

'Why?'

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'Because I have just received this telegram from Mr Cubitt,' he said, giving the telegram to me. I read the words 'SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED. WILL CALL AT YOUR ROOMS THIS MORNING. CUBITT.'

We didn't have to wait long. In a short time, Mr Cubitt arrived looking tired and worried.

'This is very bad, Mr Holmes,' he said, sitting down in a chair. 'Slowly, slowly, these messages are killing my wife. What can I do? What does it mean?'

'Has she said anything yet?'

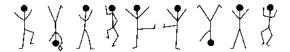
'No, not yet. I'm sure she wants to speak to me about it, but she can't. She is too frightened to talk about it.'

'But do you have anything new to tell me?'

'Yes, Mr Holmes. I have some more pictures of the dancing men, and I have seen the man who draws them.'

'You have seen him!'

'Yes, I have. But let me tell you everything. After my last visit to you, the very first thing I saw next morning were some more pictures of dancing men. They had been drawn on a small building in our garden, so I could see them easily from the window of my room. Look. This is what they were like this time.'



'Very good. Very good. Please go on,' said Holmes.

'Well, I washed away the pictures after I had copied them, Mr Holmes, but the next morning there were nine more pictures on the door. Look.'



Holmes looked very pleased, and smiled.

'This is just what I need,' he said.

'Three days later there was another one. Here it is.'



'It was on a piece of paper in the garden. You see, it is just like the others.'

Cubitt sees the stranger

Cubitt waited for Holmes to look at the pictures, and then he continued with his story.

'After that I decided to wait and try to catch the man who was doing it. So I sat in my office. I can easily see the garden from my office window. At about two o'clock in the middle of the night, I was sitting near the window. I heard someone behind me. It was my wife. She asked me to come to bed and to stop worrying about the dancing men. She said we should go away for a holiday to forget about the whole thing.

'But just as she spoke, I saw something moving in the garden. It was a man, moving slowly in the dark 10

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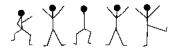
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towards the house. I took my gun. I was going to run out into the garden, but my wife threw her arms around me and asked me not to move. She held me tightly, and would not let me go out.

'At last I got free, but it was too late. By the time I had opened the door and reached the garden, the man had gone. But there on the door was the same picture of the dancing men that I had found twice before. And although I couldn't find him anywhere in the garden, the next morning there was another picture of the dancing men on the door. This time it was under the line of dancing men which I had already seen. Look. This is what they looked like.'



Holmes was very excited by this.

'Tell me, Mr Cubitt, was this second group of dancing men part of the first group?'

'It was on a different part of the door, Mr Holmes.'

'Very good. That is most important. And will you be staying long here in London?'

'No. I must go back today. I can't leave my wife alone in the house at night. She is too frightened.'

'You are right. Then leave these pictures with me. In a few days time I will visit you. I hope I will have some good news for you then.'

We go to North Walsham

As soon as Mr Cubitt left, Holmes put all the pictures of the dancing men on the table. He studied them closely. For two hours he worked, writing numbers and letters in his book. Then he suddenly stood up and turned to me.

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'Watson, I want you to send this telegram. If this brings the answer I hope for, we will soon know the meaning of this puzzle.'

I didn't know what to think. But I decided to wait until Holmes told me what he was thinking. For two days we heard nothing. Then, on the evening of the second day, a letter arrived from Hilton Cubitt. In it was another picture. He had found it that morning in the garden:

Holmes studied it closely for several minutes. His face suddenly turned white.

'This has gone far enough. Is there a train to North Walsham tonight?'

I looked at the newspaper. The last train had just gone.

'Then we shall take the first train in the morning,' said Holmes. Just then the reply to his telegram arrived.

Holmes read the telegram and then said, 'Yes, just as I thought. It is most important we get to North Walsham as quickly as we can.'

The next morning we took the first train to North Walsham. When we arrived, we asked the station master if he could tell us how to get to Mr Cubitt's house. He turned to us with a worried look on his face.

'Are you the detectives from London?'

'Why do you ask?' asked Holmes.

'Because a policeman was here a short time ago. He said there had been a shooting at the Manor, and some detectives were coming to find out what had happened. Or perhaps one of you gentlemen is a doctor? He said a doctor was coming too. But you must hurry. She's not dead yet.'

Holmes turned to the station master.

'Do you mean Ridling Thorpe Manor? The home of Mr and Mrs Hilton Cubitt? What has happened?'

'Oh dear. It is very bad I'm afraid, sir. Both Mr Cubitt and his wife have been shot. The servants say that Mrs Cubitt shot her husband, and then tried to kill herself. Mr Cubitt is dead, but his wife is still alive.'

Chapter Three

We rode to Cubitt's house in a carriage. While we were going there, Holmes didn't say a word. He sat back in his seat without looking once out of the windows.

After a time we arrived at a large old house built of red bricks.

'That's Ridling Thorpe Manor,' said the driver.

As we walked towards the house, a man came out of the front door and spoke to us.

'I am Inspector Martin of the Norfolk Police. And who are you?'

He was very surprised to learn who we were. He asked why we were there.

'We are here to find out the meaning of the dancing men,' said Holmes. 'I will tell you all about it later, Inspector Martin. We have arrived too late to save poor Mr Cubitt. But we must try to find the person who killed him as quickly as we can.'

As we went into the house, a doctor came down the stairs. He told us that Mrs Cubitt was still alive. A bullet had gone into the front of her head, but she would not die. She could not speak yet, however.

The doctor didn't know if Mrs Cubitt had shot herself in the head, or been shot by somebody else. Only one gun had been found in the room, and it had been fired twice. Mr Hilton Cubitt had been shot through the heart, but he may have fired the gun himself. When Mr and Mrs Cubitt were found, the gun lay on the floor half-way between them both.

'Has Mr Cubitt been moved?' asked Holmes.

'No, we have only moved Mrs Cubitt.'

'How long have you been here, doctor?'

'Since four o'clock.'

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