

I Spy - Sherlock Holmes

Written by
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Based on the characters originally created
By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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Characters

Doctor Watson (M)	– early 50s, ex-military, well-educated with a stalwart figure.
Sherlock Holmes (M)	– early 50s, very intelligent, studious, somewhat eccentric.
Mrs Hudson (F)	– 60s, a little abrupt but well meaning
Harriet (F)	– early 40s Watson's sister, smart, kind and soft hearted
Lady Arabella Marshal (F)	– late 40s a smart businesswoman
James Moriarty (M)	– early 40s, intelligent with a touch of the 'spider' about him
Lestrade (M)	– mid 50s, from a lower-middleclass background, plodding but thorough
Stagehands/Police Officers (E)	– (minimum 2) non-speaking, must be able to move furniture.

Act I

Scene 1 – The Apartment of Holmes & Watson

(The stage is bare and dimly lit. Watson enters and stands down centre facing the audience. A spotlight on Watson)

Watson: **(Surveying the audience as he speaks)** It is fair to say that I have had many strange and challenging adventures with my good friend, Sherlock Holmes. Yet, I never imagined that, one day, I should be involved in a case of international espionage! However, such is the case that I set before you this evening.

It began one autumn afternoon. A quiet, rather boring autumn afternoon to be frank. Indeed, it would be true to say that the affairs of Holmes and Watson had been ‘rather quiet’ and ‘boring’ for some time. Little did we know how things were, so rapidly, about to change.

(He turns and clicks his fingers. The Stagehands enter stage left and set: a small settee, centre and facing the audience, two comfortable chairs either side and at an angle, and a small table in front of the settee. Then stand back, almost to attention, with hands behind their backs. Watson moves to the chair which is stage right of the settee. A Stagehand gives Watson a newspaper as he approaches the chair)

Watson: **(Taking the newspaper and sitting)** Thank you. That will be all.

(The Stagehands give a slight nod of the head, turn sharply, hold for a beat and then exit, stage left. As the Stagehands exit, Holmes enters from stage left and walks, swiftly to take up a position looking out of the window, which is down stage and centre, looking out towards the audience)

Holmes: **(After a pause)** Do you ever get the feeling that we are being observed, Watson?

Watson: **(Looking over the top of his newspaper)** Hmm? What’s that?

Holmes: Observed! Do you ever get the feeling that someone is watching you?

Watson: Huh. Who’d want to observe me? **(Back to his newspaper)**

Holmes: Hmm. I think you’d be surprised. **(Moves to one side of the window and looks down into the street at an angle)** Although, I was thinking more from the *us* point-of-view.

Watson: **(Looking up again)** Us? Oh, I see what you mean. **(Thinking for a moment and then)** Mind you, I still can’t see who would care to observe Holmes & Watson; after all, we’re the ones who usually do the observing, are we not?

Holmes: **(Moving to the opposite side of the window and looking down again)** Indeed, old chum. Indeed.

Watson: **(Putting down his paper rather irritated)** I say, Holmes, what are you doing? Dancing up and down like I don’t know what?

Holmes: **(Ignoring his irritation)** Hardly dancing, dear fellow. You know my

feelings on that activity.

Watson: **(Picking up his paper again)** I just wish you'd settle down. Play the violin or something. **(Looking up)** Well, maybe not that but... you always get like this when things are quiet.

Holmes: **(Over his shoulder)** Really? Like what?

Watson: Fidgety! You get very fidgety! And, I'm sorry, but I have to say, it can be rather annoying.

Holmes: **(Not really listening)** Hmm. I'm sure. **(As he moves from one side of the window to the other, studying the street again)** I spy with my little eye....

Watson: **(Exasperated and standing)** Oh, for goodness sake! Come on, let's take a turn around the park.

Holmes: **(Over his should)** The park, old fellow? Are you bored?

Watson: Not at all but you clearly are.

Holmes: **(Back to the window)** On the contrary, Watson, I am most intrigued.

Watson: Intrigued? What can be so intriguing about staring out of the window, playing childish games?

Holmes: **(Half turning to him)** Huh?

Watson: **(Moving to stand by him at the window)** Staring out of the window, playing I spy!

Holmes: Oh, I see. No, no, dear fellow. No game. Take a look for yourself.

Watson: Oh, very well. **(Studies the street outside then turns to Holmes)** What letter am I looking for?

Holmes: Ha-ha. No letter. Just observe.

Watson: Ah, so *we* are observing now.

Holmes: Quite so.

Watson: **(Studies the street again but gives up in exasperation)** Oh, I don't know, Holmes! I don't know what I'm observing! I don't know if we're playing a game! I don't know if it's some sort of test!

Holmes: **(Placing a hand on his shoulder)** No letter. No game. No test. Simply observe.

Watson: **(Heaves a heavy sigh and returns his attention to the street)** Right.

Holmes: Now, without getting too close to the glass, survey the street from one end to the other.

(Watson does as he is bidden)

Holmes: Good. And take special note of the business of the people passing to-and-fro.

(Watson slowly moves his head from side to side as if studying the street)

Holmes: Excellent. Now, think carefully, is there anything odd about the scene?

Watson: Odd? Righto. **(Studies the street again)** Well, I'm sorry, Holmes, but it all looks perfectly normal to me. Just a regular day in Baker Street. Except, well, yes, maybe those two figures standing by the lampposts at each end.

Holmes: **(Excitedly)** Exactly, Watson! Exactly! And why do they stand out?

Watson: **(Looking from one end of the street to the other)** Well, I suppose the fact that they are dressed in rather similar clothing, for one.

Holmes: **(Encouraging)** Yes...and...?

Watson: Oh, yes, well, they aren't actually moving; just leaning on the lampposts, reading newspapers.

Holmes: Aha...precisely!

Watson: **(Suddenly spotting something and getting more seriously involved)** Oh, now then...

Holmes: Go on.

Watson: Well, when one looks more closely, one can see that they aren't really reading at all but... why, yes... they keep looking across here.

Holmes: **(Really excited)** Brilliant, Watson. Brilliant. By Jove, we shall make a detective out of you yet.

Watson: **(A little embarrassed).** Oh, I say, let's not get carried away. After all, it is merely a matter of observation.

Holmes: No mere matter at all, old friend. The observation of a well-trained eye is what it is. **(Looking out of the window again)** The question now is... why are they watching Holmes and Watson?

Watson: Really? You think they are watching us?

Holmes: Well, I suggest that they are more likely to be watching us than watching Mrs Hudson.

Watson: Hmm. There is a certain logic in that, I suppose.

Holmes: **(Spotting something else)** Ah! Now then.

Watson: What is it?

Holmes: Well, unless I am very much mistaken, it's your sister.

Watson: Harriet?

Holmes: The same... and in something of a hurry, too.

Watson: **(Trying to press against the window to see)** Are you sure?

Holmes: **(Holding him back)** Steady there. We must not let our observers know that we have spotted them.

(SFX. Doorbell)

Holmes: That'll be her now.

(A pause. Then off-stage voices and approaching footsteps. Followed by a knock at the door)

Holmes: Come.

(Mrs Hudson enters)

Mrs Hudson: A visitor, gentlemen.

Harriet: **(Enters hurriedly. She speaks urgently).** Oh, please, forgive the intrusion.

Watson: **(Rushing over to her and taking her hands in his)** Harriet!

Holmes: No intrusion at all, dear lady, I assure you.

Watson: No, indeed. Please come in. Be seated. **(He leads her to the settee)**

(Harriet sits in the centre of the settee and Watson sits in the chair stage right of it)

Mrs Hudson: I suppose you'll be wanting tea.

Holmes: Thank you, Mrs Hudson, that would be most kind.

(Mrs Hudson exits muttering. Harriet glances at Mrs Hudson as she exits and then looks at Holmes. Holmes shrugs, gives Harriet a knowing smile and then sits in the chair stage left of the settee)

Holmes: Now, my dear, what brings you here with such urgency?

Harriet: **(Taking out an envelope from her bag)** Well, this, actually. **(Handing it to Holmes)** Your brother, Mycroft, sent me with it and he was quite insistent that I brought it to you as soon as possible.

Holmes: **(Sits in the chair stage left of the settee, studying the envelope)** Mycroft? But why didn't he just come himself?

Harriet: I have no idea but, as I say, he did make it seem exceedingly urgent.

Watson: Maybe the contents will explain what's going on.

Holmes: As you say, Watson **(He opens the envelope, takes out the letter and studies it)** Now, let's see... written in a hurry by the look of the handwriting. **(Reading the contents)** Hmm. **(Reads)** By George. **(Reads)** Well, I never.

Watson: Well, what is it Holmes? Come on, don't keep us in suspense.

Holmes: **(Finishing reading and then standing and moving back to the window)** Ha! I spy with my little eye....

Watson: Oh, for goodness' sake, don't start that again.

Holmes: No, Watson, not the game, but it all makes sense now.

Watson: **(Not sure)** It does?

Harriet: **(Confused)** I'm sorry but I...

Holmes: No, of course, please excuse me. **(He paces up and down a little)** Apparently, Mycroft has received intelligence that we might be under some sort of threat.

Watson: What's that you say?

Harriet: Oh, my goodness!

Holmes: He sent you, Arabella, because he thought you would be a little less conspicuous than if he came himself.

Watson: I say!

Harriet: But, what sort of threat, Sherlock?

Holmes: I'm afraid he doesn't know but I have a sneaking suspicion that his warning has come a little too late.

(Watson and Harriet are clearly shocked)

Holmes: Y-e-s. **(Moving to the window and studying the street again)** I spy with my little eye...

Watson: **(Standing and moving over to the window)** I say, you don't mean...?

Holmes: Indeed, I do, old chum. Indeed I do.

Harriet: **(Joining them at the window and peering out)** But what is it?

Watson: **(Holding her back a little)** Careful, mi dear, we don't want to give the game away.

(Harriet is clearly confused)

Holmes: We need to be discrete, my dear. Now, if you look carefully, from one end of Baker Street to the other, you should spot two rather odd characters who look rather like each other.

Harriet: **(Studying the street)** Odd? But in what way odd? What are they doing?

Holmes: Well, nothing, actually.

Watson: (With a little chuckle) That's rather the point, you see?

Harriet: Oh, right. (Looks again) Hmm. Ah, yes! I've got them now.

(She goes to point but Holmes grabs her arm)

Harriet: Oh, sorry. Discrete, yes. Anyhow, is it the two standing by the lamp posts pretending to read newspapers?

Watson: That's it! Well done! By Jove, we'll make a detective of you yet!

(Homes gives him a look and Watson smiles and shrugs)

Harriet: Oh, how exciting.

Holmes: (Looking at Watson) And dangerous, possibly.

Watson: (Suddenly concerned) Oh! Dangerous? Yes. I hadn't thought of that.

Holmes: Hmm. Anyhow, we need to think of a plan. (He turns back to the centre of the room, deep in thought)

Watson: (Following him) A plan! Yes, that's what we need.

(Watson sits, deep in thought, whilst Holmes paces a little)

Harriet: (After a pause. Still at the window) Well, I never. How strange.

(Holmes and Watson rush back to her)

Watson: Harriet! What is it?

Harriet: The one up to the left there. Look!

Watson: I say! He's talking to some woman.

Holmes: Indeed. And, they're summoning the other one over.

(The three stand, looking to the left)

Watson: Huh! I wonder who she is?

Harriet: I *know* who she is.

Holmes: (Surprised) You do?

Harriet: I do. Arabella Marshal.

Holmes: Lady Marshal? Of Marshal Industries?

Harriet: The same. I've seen her on several occasions at charitable functions.

Watson: I'm sorry to be a bit of a dunce, you two, but I'm afraid you have me at an advantage.

Holmes: Marshal Industries, old chum. A very influential outfit. Lady Marshal took it over when her husband was killed in a climbing accident on Everest.

Watson: Oh, yes! I remember now; terrible tragedy.

Holmes: Quite. **(Leaning a little further forward)** The question is, what is Lady Marshal doing mixing with the likes of our two friends out there?

(Harriet leans out to get a better view)

Holmes: **(Holding her back again)** Careful, my dear, if you have seen her at these charitable functions, chances are that she has seen you, too.

(There is a knock at the door and Mrs Hudson enters with a tea tray)

Mrs Hudson: Your tea.

Holmes: Ah, perfect timing, Mrs H.

Mrs Hudson: **(Placing the tea tray on the small table in front of the settee)** Why, what time is it?

(Harriet, Holmes and Watson sit themselves around the table)

Holmes: Why, it's nearly 3.30 but I just meant.....

Mrs. Hudson: Well, I don't see why that's perfect timing. I mean, 4 o'clock is usually the correct time for tea in the afternoon.

Holmes: Yes, quite. Actually, I just meant that your timing was perfect as we were all ready for one of your delicious cups of tea.

Mrs Hudson: **(She stares at him for a moment and then)** Will there be anything else?

Holmes: **(Whilst pouring the tea)** Err no. Thank you kindly, Mrs Hudson. We'll ring if we require anything further.

Mrs Hudson: Further?

Watson: He means we'll ring if we need anything else, Mrs H.

Mrs Hudson: **(Exiting)** Oh, right. **(Muttering)** I don't know why he doesn't just say that. Further, indeed. Further than what? Wapping?

(Harriet looks at Holmes again)

Holmes: **(Just smiles at her and hands Harriet a cup)** Right. Now, let us sit and ponder our way forward. Harriet, tell us what you know about Lady Marshall.

Harriet: **(Taking the tea)** Thank you. Well, very little, really. As I said, I have seen her at a few charity functions but only actually spoken to her once or twice and, even then, just to pass pleasantries.

Holmes: Hmm. I wonder how we might contrive a meeting with her?

Watson: Could we not just pay her a visit at Marshal Industries? Say we're on some case or other?

Holmes: Yes, we could but a little obvious maybe. I should prefer something a little more subtle; accidental, almost.

Harriet: Well, I've seen her in the park quite frequently. Most mornings, in fact.

Holmes: Indeed? Now that might be just the opportunity I'm looking for. Tell me, Harriet, are you busy tomorrow morning?

Harriet: **(Smiling)** No, as it happens, I'm not.

Holmes: Excellent. Then a walk in the park it is.

Watson: What about me? Shall I tag along?

Holmes: No need, Watson. Don't want you playing gooseberry, do we? Besides, I have another little errand I should like you to run.

Watson: Oh, really? That sounds rather exciting.

Holmes: **(With a little chuckle)** Right up your street then old chum. **(Freezes)**

(Lights fade to dim. Watson steps forward and clicks his fingers. Holmes stands and exits swiftly, stage right, as the Stagehands enter, stage left. Whilst Watson addresses the audience, the Stagehands remove the settee, etc. Then return with the park bench and place it front and centre. When they are set, they stand with hands behind their backs, as before)

Watson: **(Addressing the audience)** And so, the following morning, Harriet and Sherlock, headed for the park to see if they could arrange a 'chance encounter' with Lady Marshal, whilst I determined to a little bit of private investigation of my own. **(He turns to the Stagehands, clicks his fingers and exits stage right)**

(Stagehands nod and exit, stage left. Lights fade to blackout)

Scene 2 – The Park

(The next morning. After a pause, the lights fade up. Moriarty and Lady Marshall are sitting on the bench, deep in conversation. Moriarty is, at the same time, studying a newspaper. Harriet and Holmes enter, up stage right, they stop and look towards the other couple for a moment)

Marshal: ...And you are sure you have everything in hand?

Moriarty: Trust me.

Marshal: I trust very few people, as well you know, James. And do you have to read the newspaper whilst I'm talking to you?

Moriarty: I'm not reading it. I'm studying it.

Marshal: Same difference as far as I'm concerned. Either way it is rather rude, you know. What are you looking for anyway?

Moriarty: **(Folding the paper and putting it on his lap)** You are quite right, of course. Many apologies.

(Holmes nudges Harriet towards Lady Marshal and Moriarty).

Harriet: **(Walking quickly towards the bench)** Lady Marshal? That is you, isn't it?

Marshal: **(Turning around, surprised, she stares from Harriet to Holmes and then Back)** I'm sorry, my dear, you appear to have the advantage of me.

Harriet: **(Holding out her hand)** Harriet. Harriet Watson. We met at the "Money for Orphans" function last week...

(Lady Marshal looks down at the outstretched hand but doesn't take it and just stares back at Harriet)

Moriarty: **(Jumping up and taking Harriet's hand)** Forgive her Ladyship, she's been working far too hard, lately. I remember you, of course. **(Leans forward and kisses the back of Harriet's hand)** I never forget a pretty face. Please, take my seat.

Harriet: **(Shyly and sitting)** That's very kind of you Mr...err...

Moriarty: **(Bowing)** Moriarty. James Moriarty.

Marshal: *Professor* James Moriarty to be precise.

Holmes: **(Stepping forwards and holding out his hand)** Professor? Interesting. In what area, may I ask?

Moriarty: **(Smiling and shaking Sherlock's hand)** Mathematics, as a matter of fact and it's Mr Sherlock Holmes is it not?

Sherlock: You know me?

Moriarty: But, who does not know the great Sherlock Holmes? I am a great admirer.

Holmes: I'm flattered. And where is it that you teach your Mathematics, professor?

Moriarty: Stonyhurst College. I doubt you've heard of it.

Holmes: Ah, but I have indeed. Stonyhurst has a fine reputation. You must certainly know your subject if you are teaching there.

Moriarty: Ah, now it is my turn to be flattered.

Marshal: The Professor has kindly consented to work for Marshal Industries.

Moriarty: **(Giving Lady Marshal a look)** But, only as a consultant, you understand?

Holmes: Oh? In what area? Not mathematics, surely?

Moriarty: No. I'm looking to (pause) broaden my horizons, shall we say? I am more of a... security adviser.

Holmes: Well, that's certainly very different. Although, I wasn't aware that Marshal Industries had any security issues.

Marshal: Oh, no, Mr Holmes. Marshal Industries is quite secure, I can assure you. In fact, we have opened up a new operation, which is where the Professor comes in.

Holmes: I see. Well, that sounds most intriguing. And in what field of industry might that be needed? If I may be so bold as to ask.

Marshal: Information exchange.

Holmes: Information exchange? I am intrigued.

(Lady Marshal Gives him a questioning look)

Holmes: What exactly does that mean?

Marshal: Why, whatever you want it to mean, Mr Holmes. Whatever you want it to mean.

Holmes: Well, and forgive me for I am no business entrepreneur, but it does rather have the ring of 'industrial espionage'.

Moriarty: **(Jumping in quickly and looking at her wide-eyed)** Aha. Well now, that certainly does make it sound much more dramatic than it really is. Besides, the project is still in something of a development stage.

Holmes: Indeed? Never-the-less, I wouldn't have thought that was the sort of thing a Professor of Mathematics would be interested in.

Moriarty: Oh, on the contrary, Mr Holmes, I have many fields of interest. I very much enjoy an intellectual challenge.

Holmes: Hmm. It would seem that we have something in common, Professor.

Moriarty: Agreed. I must admit, I have followed your cases with increasing admiration. Your solving of the case of The Dancing Men was sheer genius. Thinking outside of the box you see.

Holmes: **(Nodding his head slightly in appreciation)** Thank you. So, your interests include the solving of mysteries, too?

Moriarty: Most definitely. Especially, if some sort of crime has been committed.

Holmes: Ah, then maybe you should have turned your studies to criminology? Become a member of New Scotland Yard, perhaps?

Moriarty: **(Scoffing a little)** What? Ha ha ha. I'm sorry I don't mean to scoff but the idea of working with such bumbling fools; I think not! Besides, most of the 'crimes' that they get to investigate aren't what I'd really call 'crimes' at all.

Holmes: Really?

Moriarty: Really. On the other hand, the cases that *you* get to sink your teeth into... Completely different level of intellect required.

Holmes: **(Thoughtfully staring at Moriarty)** Hmm. Interesting.

Moriarty: **(Maybe a little to excited)** Exactly, Mr Holmes. 'Interesting' is the word. Not your humdrum, run of the mill: breaking and entering, pick-pocketing, smashing and grabbing stuff but really interesting, intellectually challenging crime. That's what excites me.

Holmes: Yes. I can see that.

Moriarty: **(Gathering himself)** I'm sorry, I do get rather excited about this subject. **(To Harriet)** Apologies, Miss Watson, I didn't mean to bore.

Harriet: Not at all, Professor.

Moriarty: James, please.

Harriet: **(Smiling shyly again)** James.

Marshal: Well... **(Pointedly)** James... I think it is probably time for me to return to the office. Will you accompany me?

Moriarty: it will be my pleasure, of course. **(Turning to Harriet he takes her hand and kisses the back of it again)** Miss Watson, a pleasure.

Harriet: Likewise, Mr... James. But then, if I must call you James, you must call me Harriet.

Moriarty: Indeed I shall... Harriet. Until we meet again. **(Turning to Holmes)** Mr Holmes. It has been an honour. **(Holding out his hand)**

Holmes: **(Shaking his hand)** Likewise, Professor. And most interesting.

Moriarty: **(Holding on to Holmes' hand and looking him directly in the face).** I look forward to meeting you again.

Holmes: Oh, I'm sure we will, Professor. I'm sure we will.

(There is a short pause as the two stare at each other for a moment)

Moriarty: **(Releasing Sherlock's hand and turning swiftly to Lady Marshal)** Right, your Ladyship, business calls. Let us away.

Marshal: **(Standing)** Quite. **(To Holmes)** Well, nice to have met you, Mr Holmes.

Holmes: Lady Marshal.

Marshal: Oh, and you, of course, my dear. No doubt we shall run into each other again at some charity function or other.

Harriet: A pleasure, your Ladyship.

(Lady Marshal takes Moriarty's offered arm and they exit stage left)

Holmes: **(Taking the seat next to Harriet)** Well, what do you make of that?

Harriet: Oh, err... rather charming.

Holmes: **(Surprised)** What? Really?

Harriet: Oh, no, not Lady Marshal. I thought she was rather rude, to be honest. I mean, she clearly recognised me and just decided that she would snub me.

Holmes: Agreed. But this James Moriarty fellow? You found him charming?

Harriet: **(A little embarrassed)** Well, yes. Didn't you.

Holmes: In a way, I suppose. Although, there was something that quite feel right about him.

Harriett: Oh, Sherlock. You are a suspicious one.

Holmes: Huh. Quite possibly, but, in my experience, it is better to be cautious. One can always be more relaxed with people once you have got to know a little more about them. I believe that *trust* is something one earns.

Harriet: Like you and my brother, you mean?

Holmes: Absolutely. Like good old, reliable Watson and I.

Harriet: Well, if you trust him and rely on him so much, why do you still insist on calling him by his surname?

Holmes: Pardon?

Harriet: You never call him by his first name.

Holmes: **(Squirming a little)** I... I do.

Harriet: What is it then?

Holmes: What's what?

Harriet: Come on, Sherlock, don't play dumb. His first name?

Holmes: Well, it's... it's... *John*! John Watson.

Harriet: Hmm. Lucky guess.

Holmes: Nonsense. **(Getting back to business)** Now, look, we really must focus on the matter at hand. What I meant by my original question was: what do you make of their supposed new project?

Harriett: Oh, this information exchange thing you mean? As you said, sounds like some sort of industrial espionage.

Holmes: Quite. **(Standing and holding out his hand)** Well, come along. Let us return and see what Wat... John, has discovered.

(Harriet takes his hand and stands, smiling. They exit stage right as the Lights fade to dim. Watson enters stage right, looks around, then clicks his fingers. During the following, the Stagehands remove the bench and re-set the scene for 221b Baker Street. When finished, they stand with hands behind their backs)

Watson: **(Moves to the front to address the audience)** So, the *chance* encounter was made in the park. Indeed, as it turned out later, Holmes had uncovered more than he had really bargained for. Little did he know, however, that I, too, had uncovered some interesting details regarding Marshal Industries. **(Moves to the chair which is stage right of the settee)**

(A Stagehand passes Watson a newspaper as he approaches the chair)

Watson: **(Taking the newspaper and sitting)** Thank you. That will be all.

(The Stagehands give a slight nod of the head, turn sharply, hold for a beat and then exit, stage left. Blackout)

Scene 3 – The Apartment of Homes & Watson.

(As the lights fade up, Watson is sitting in the chair reading his newspaper. Harriet and Sherlock can be heard off-stage, which distracts Watson from his reading. They enter)

Holmes: Ah, Watson, you're back. (He looks at Harriet out of the corner of his eye)

(Harriet gives a quick grin to Holmes and then turns smiling to Watson)

Watson: (Standing to greet them) Harriet. Holmes. Indeed, I am. How was the park?

Holmes: Very interesting. Very interesting indeed.

Harriet: And how about you, John? Have you had a good morning?

Watson: Yes, most rewarding. (Showing her to the settee) Won't you be seated? Would you like some tea?

(Harriet sits on the settee)

Holmes: (Before Harriet can answer and moving to the window) Already sorted, old man. Saw Mrs H on the way in.

Watson: Ah. Jolly good.

Holmes: I see our friends are still about.

Watson: (Joining Holmes at the window) Yes. Are you surprised?

Holmes: Well, I suppose not. Although, after our little encounter in the park, I thought they might have been warned-off.

Watson: Really? (Returning to his chair) Well, you must tell me all about it.

(Holmes moves and takes the seat stage left of the settee. SFX: A knock at the door)

Mrs Hudson: (Enters with the tea tray) Here's your tea.

Holmes: Ah, thank you. Just pop the tray on the table, would you?

Mrs Hudson: Pop? Pop it?

Watson: Just put it on the coffee table, thank you Mrs Hudson.

Mrs Hudson: (She places the tray on the small table in front of the settee) Oh, right, yes. I'll just *pop* it down here. Shall I be mum?

Holmes: No, I'm sure we'll be fine, thank you.

Mrs Hudson: As you like. (Muttering as she leaves) Pop it? Pop it? What is it? A balloon or something.

(Harriet looks at Watson who shrugs and smiles. Holmes pours the tea and hands a cup to Harriet and a cup to Watson)

Watson: **(Taking the tea)** Hmm. We don't need to be putting that poor lady in any danger, Holmes.

Holmes: **(Sitting back with his own cup of tea and taking a sip)** No, of course not, old man.

(Watson stares at Holmes)

Holmes: **(Feigning innocence)** What? Would I? **(Quickly changing the subject.)** Anyway! Our encounter at the park! Harriet?

Harriet: What? Me?

Holmes: Why not? I'm sure John would like to hear your take on it. **(Smiles at Watson)**

Watson: **(Wagging a finger at him)** You're up to something, Holmes.

Holmes: **(Innocently again)** What do you mean?

Watson: You never call me John.

Holmes: **(Looks at Harriet and then back to Watson)** Oh, really? Well, I shall endeavour to put that right.

Watson: Hmm. **(Turning to Harriet.)** I'm sorry, Harriet, you were about to tell me of your meeting in the park. You did manage to see Lady Marshal then?

(During Harriet's account of their meeting, Sherlock reacts accordingly: a few quick glances to Watson, raised eyebrows, nods and so on; as appropriate)

Harriet: Well, as we planned, we did manage to 'accidentally' bump into Lady Marshall in the park.

Watson: A-hah!

Harriet: But... she wasn't alone.

Watson: Indeed?

Harriett: No. As we approached she was in deep conversation with a rather charming young man. **(Giving Sherlock a glance)**

Watson: Really? And did you discover who this charming young man was?

Harriet: Oh, yes, she introduced us: a Mr James Moriarty!

Sherlock: *Professor* James Moriarty to be precise.

Harriet: Indeed.

Watson: A Professor, hey? Of what and where?

Harriet: Mathematics and Stonyhurst College.

Watson: Stonyhurst? Well, he must know his stuff.

Harriet: Oh, yes, he is clearly very intelligent.

(Watson gives Sherlock a glance and they both smile)

Harriet: (Spotting them) What? (Pause) What?

(Watson and Holmes just look at her blankly)

Harriet: Oh, you two. Honestly. (To Holmes) You must admit, he is a well educated and intelligent fellow.

Holmes: Absolutely. (With a slight smirk) And charming.

Harriet: Stop it!

Watson: He's only teasing, my dear.

Harriet: I know. And you're just as bad.

Watson: Ah! A brother's privilege. (Changing the subject) So, Holmes, what was your impression of the fellow?

Holmes: As Harriet says, he's an intelligent fellow and charming, no doubt, but... well, I found him a little threatening.

Harriet: (Surprised) Threatening?

Holmes: Well, perhaps, *challenging* might be a more appropriate term.

Harriet: Really? But he complimented you did he not?

Holmes: Yes, he did, but it was almost with a smile and it was his reference to how he enjoyed an intellectual challenge.

Watson: Huh, nothing wrong with that, old man.

Holmes: Maybe not, but then, I must admit, he really got my hackles up when, whilst touching on what he called "intellectual crime", he referred to the members of New Scotland Yard as "bumbling fools".

Watson: Well, there have been occasions when you have not been too complimentary about them yourself. With the exception of Lestrade, of course. Anything else?

Holmes: Yes, as we shook hands to take our leave, his parting comment as to how he looked forward to meeting me again was said with just a hint of menace, along with a certain *threat* in his gaze.

Harriet: Oh, really, Sherlock. I noticed none of this.

Watson: (Trying to be peace maker) Erm. Without wishing to be rude, my dear, I must point out that Sherlock is, generally, a very astute judge of character. Having said that, it does sound like you may be being a little harsh, Holmes.

Holmes: Yes, you may be right. Let us hope so, anyway. Please, Harriet, continue with your account of our meeting.

Watson: Yes, I'm interested to know why these two were together?

Harriet: Well, it would appear that the...err... aforementioned gentleman has grown weary of academia and has decided to go into industry. Well, Marshall Industries to be precise.

Watson: Indeed? In what role?

Harriet: Security Adviser.

Watson: Security Adviser? I wasn't aware that Marshall Industries had any security issues.

Holmes: Exactly what I said, old man.

Harriet: Quite. However, Lady Marshall told us that they are planning a new operation which, in some way or other, involves security.

Watson: I'm sorry. I may be being rather dim but I don't really see how this professor fellow comes into it?

Harriet: Well, no, I suppose I don't either.

Holmes: It is odd. Maybe, it's just some sort of logistics exercise. Although, from his attitude, it would have to be pretty challenging. I suppose it would depend on what type of *security* one is talking about.

(Harriett and Watson look at him expectantly)

Holmes: If, as Lady Marshall says, the company has no security issues then it would be safe to assume that they are conducting this new project on behalf of some other party.

Watson: Hmm, I see what you mean. But what sort of security are we talking about and for whom are they providing the service?

Holmes: Exactly, what we need to find out, old friend.

Harriet: **(To Watson)** I'm sorry, I'm not experienced in these things but... how exactly are we going to do that?

Watson: Huh, well, I do have a little experience in these things but I haven't a clue either. **(To Holmes)** Holmes?

Holmes: Hmm. I have few ideas. The problem is: where to start?

Harriet: I suppose that's always the problem.

Watson: Huh. Well, I must admit, I usually wait for Holmes and then just tag along. Having said that, I'm not really sure that you should get involved in any of this, Harriet.

Harriet: Oh, nonsense. I'm already involved. Tell him, Sherlock.

Holmes: Err, well, far be it from me to come between a sister and brother but I do rather think that Harriet is involved. I mean, it was her who brought us the letter from Mycroft and it was her who arranged our ‘chance meeting’ with Lady Marshall.

Watson: Hmm, I suppose. But I should be obliged if we could keep her further involvement to a minimum.

Harriet: Oh, John. I’m not your little baby sister any more.

Watson: (Softly) Oh, yes you are, Harriet. Oh, yes you are.

Harriet: (Leaning forward and giving him a peck on the cheek) You old silly. (Back to Holmes) So, Sherlock, where do we start?

Holmes: Well, I have a feeling that our search starts right here, with us. (He moves down stage to look out of the window) I mean, why did Mycroft send us that warning? Where do we come into all of this? (Pause) I spy with my little eye.

(Harriet and Watson join him at the window so that all three are now looking out across the audience)

Watson: Our two friends, you mean?

Holmes: (Looking up and down the street) Indeed. Our two friends, Watson. We need to find out which one of us they are watching.

Watson: Well, yes. Quite. (Not sure) And... err... how are we going to do that, again?

Holmes: Well, I think the best course would be for each of us to leave, one at a time, take some circuitous route, and just see which one of us they follow.

Watson: Capital idea! Simple but effective.

(Holmes give him a look)

Watson: As always, Holmes. As always.

(Holmes and Harriet freeze, as Watson addresses the audience)

Watson: (To the audience) And so, we followed Holmes’ plan. First, just as a wild shot, Holmes sent Mrs Hudson to post his letter but, as we suspected they would our friends remained at their posts. So, Harriet went next.

Harriet: (To the audience) I walked towards Grosvenor Square where I sat reading for 15 minutes. Then returned via Park Street, Gloucester Place and Crawford Street. (A little disappointed) No sign of either of our friends or anyone else following me. (Freezes again)

Watson: So, then it was Holmes’ turn.

Holmes: (To the audience) I simply turned right down Baker Street then went to Paddington Street Gardens where I, too, sat reading for 10 minutes or so. Then returned via Dorset Street. Likewise, no sign of anyone following. (Freezes again)

Watson: Finally, it was up to me. **(Takes a deep breath)** I must admit, I felt the pressure was on so I thought I'd really put them through their paces. Turning left up Baker Street, I headed to Regents Park. Here, I headed up towards, Winfield House, then walked around the lake, out of the park via York Gate, across Marylebone Road, down Marylebone High Street, right down Paddington Road and back to Baker Street.

(Holmes and Harriet turn and stare at him)

Watson: **(Feeling a little uneasy at their scrutiny)** What? Like I said, I wanted to put them through their paces.

Holmes: And?

Watson: **(Rather disappointed)** Nothing.

Holmes: No need to look so down-trodden, old man. Harriet and I had the same result.

Watson: But it was all such a waste of time.

Holmes: On the contrary, my dear Watson. At least we have now eliminated the obvious.

Harriet: I'm sorry, Sherlock, I don't quite follow.

Watson: Ah, well, you see. We first eliminate the obvious before we start to examine the less obvious.

Holmes: Quite so, Watson. **(Thoughtfully)** So, we now know that none of us are the target of our friends' attention, the big question is.....

All: **(Out across the audience)** Who is?

(All three freeze, looking out front. Blackout. End of Act I)

Act 2

Scene 1 – The Apartment of Homes & Watson

(The set is as at the end of Act I. As the lights fade up, Harriet, Holmes and Watson are in exactly the same positions, looking out at the audience. After a pause, Holmes suddenly springs into action)

Holmes: Of course! What a fool!

Watson: I say, Holmes are you alright?

Harriet: What is it, Sherlock?

Holmes: **(Looking from one to the other)** Why the answer was staring me in the face all the time. It's so obvious.

Harriett: It is? **(She looks from Holmes to Watson)**

Watson: Don't worry, my dear, he's always like this.

Holmes: **(Ignoring the pair)** Watson! Do you have your newspaper to hand?

Watson: Yes. It's on the armchair over there. **(Moves over to the armchair)**

(Holmes and Harriett follow him)

Watson: **(Picking up the newspaper and handing it to Holmes)** Here we are, but why? What's in there?

Holmes: **(Opens up the paper, turns the pages to the Personal Ads and starts to study them)** Aha! That is the question, old chum? That is the question.

(Harriet and Watson stand either side of Holmes and all three study the paper)

Harriet: You're looking at the Personal Column?

Holmes: Indeed. And, if we are lucky, there may well be a very personal message for us.

Watson: Well, I don't wish to be a damp squib here, Holmes, but there must be hundreds of personal messages in here.

Holmes: **(Triumphantly)** But, John, only one that could possibly interest me! This one, in fact. **(He reads aloud)** "Reminder: Old school arm-wrestling club reunion! Tonight. 2AX."

Watson: **(Confused)** And, that's our clue, is it?

Holmes: Oh, yes, indeed.

Harriet: I'm sorry, Sherlock, but I don't get it either.

Holmes: **(He quickly scans the page again)** No. Of course. **(Looking up from the paper)** I'm sorry. Please, take a seat the both of you and I'll explain, as best I can. **(He crumples up the paper and hands it back to Watson)**

(Harriet and Watson sit; Watson grumpily straightening out his newspaper)

Holmes: (As he explains he paces up and down) You see, if you recall, we came to the conclusion that our friends out there were not, in fact, looking for us. Agreed?

(Harriet and Watson agree)

Holmes: So, the question was: who were they looking out for? **(He looks at them both)**

Watson: And?

Holmes: The letter.

Harriet: The one from Mycroft?

Holmes: The very same. **(He takes the letter out and studies it).**

Watson: But the letter suggested that we might be under some sort of threat and I thought that we had just eliminated that possibility.

Holmes: Quite so, old friend, and the error was completely of my making.

Harriet: Error?

Holmes: Quite. **(Holding up the letter)** You see, I read the word “we” and assumed it to apply to us.

Watson: Well, so did I.

Harriet: And me.

Holmes: But it’s from Mycroft!

(Harriet and Watson look at each other and then at Holmes, still mystified)

Holmes: Mycroft always uses the *royal* we!

(The penny suddenly drops with Harriet and Watson)

Harriet: You mean, where ‘we’, plural, is used by a monarch or some such to refer to *themselves*, i.e. singular?

Holmes: Precisely!

Watson: So, it’s not us that is under threat but.....

All: *Mycroft!*

Watson: Well, I’ll be.

Harriet: But if he feels that he is under threat why doesn’t he just come straight out and say so?

Watson: Huh. Too many years in the secret service, I’m afraid, my dear.

Holmes: Or... just being ultra-careful.

Watson: Hmm. He doesn't trust many people does he? (**Looking at the others**). Oh, present company excepted, of course.

Holmes: Quite, John. In any case, now we have that advertisement, we can offer some help.

Watson: We can?

Holmes: We can.

Harriet: You think that was from him then?

Holmes: Not *think*... I *know* it was from him.

Watson: But how? I mean, it's just a load of gobbledegook as far as I can see.

Holmes: Good. Let us hope that it appears the same to anyone else who may be on the lookout.

(Harriet and Watson are still none the wiser)

Holmes: Forgive me. Let me explain. You see, the art of placing a secret message in the personal advertisements is to choose a topic that will immediately spring out to your intended target but not necessarily to anyone else. The key phrase there, for me being "arm-wrestling".

Watson: Ah, well, yes. Of course.

(Harriet and Watson look at each other and shrug)

Holmes: When Mycroft and I were at school, we started an arm-wrestling club.

Harriet: (**The penny drops**) So, that's the one being referred to here?

Holmes: Exactly.

Watson: (**A little huffy**) Huh, well, I don't see how we could be expected to work that out.

Holmes: Well, you aren't really supposed to be expected to work it out. As I said, a good secret message should only be obvious to your intended target.

Harriet: But if this is from Mycroft and he wants us to meet up with him I don't see how we can?

Holmes: Why not my dear?

Watson: (**Pleased with himself**) Because, Holmes, he hasn't told us where.

Harriet: Precisely!

Holmes: (**Turning and pointing at the newspaper**) Ah, but he has.

Watson: **(Opening the paper again and studying it)** Well, I don't see it. **(He reads)** "Reminder: Old school arm-wrestling club reunion tonight. 2AX." No mention of a place or time. Unless that 2AX is some sort of location.

Holmes: Well, as a matter of fact it is.

Watson: What? Some sort of hall or something?

Holmes: Not exactly but more the location of the second part of the message.

Watson: **(Studying the paper again)** What?

Holmes: **(He says the figures separately)** "2 A X". What do we have there?

Harriet: **(Stands and leans over Watson to look at the paper)** Well, there's a two, obviously, and an A and... and an X.

Watson: As I said "2AX".

Holmes: Ah, but what if we don't read it as an 'X'?

Harriet: Well, I suppose we could read it as a cross.

Holmes: Uhuh. And then we'd have...?

Watson: Well then we'd have 2 A cross.

Harriet: Two across!

Holmes: There! You have it! Watson, same level, two columns across.

(Watson looks at Holmes and then back to the paper)

Holmes: Now read the message that appears there.

Watson: **(Reading aloud)** "St Peter and St Paul's: midnight mass, tonight."

Holmes: There you go.

Harriet: So, he wants us to meet him at St Peter and St Paul's tonight, at midnight?

(Holmes just nods approval at them)

Watson: Well, I'll be. Dashed clever. **(He lowers the paper and then looks at Harriet)** Mind you, I'm not sure that I like the idea of you being further involved in this, my dear. Could be a bit dangerous.

Harriet: Oh, John, please, don't start that again. I'm not little Hattie any more. So, what's next, Sherlock?

Holmes: Next, we publish a reply. But, we can't let Mycroft be there alone.

Watson: We can't?

Holmes: No. If I'm not mistaken, we won't be the only ones scouring the personal ads for clues.

Watson: You mean that Moriarty fellow?

Holmes: I do indeed, Watson. Now, notebook and pencil please.

Watson: **(Takes a notebook and pencil from his pocket and hands them to Holmes)** Huh, I don't know why you always assume that I have these to hand.

Holmes: **(Taking them from him)** Because, old chum, I know you like to keep a few notes of our doings so that you can refer back to them when you are writing you pieces for the gazette.

(Watson looks a little sheepish)

Holmes: Now, I should be obliged if you would take this for publication in this evening's edition. You should just be able to make it if we're quick.

Watson:: Oh, well, yes, of course.

Holmes: **(He speaks as he writes)** "The School Players are happy to announce the role of Tiny in their performance of The Midnight Hour will be performed by the understudy, due to reverse part of the original actor."

(Harriet and Watson look at each other. Watson shrugs)

Watson: Probably best not to even ask, my dear.

(Holmes tears out the note and gives it to Watson who studies it, trying to work out what it means. He shakes his head)

Holmes: And, if you, Harriet, wouldn't mind, taking this note to Inspector Lestrade at Scotland Yard. **(He writes)**

Watson: Lestrade? Do we really need him involved?

Holmes: In this instance, yes, we do. Most definitely. And, let us hope that if Moriarty and friends have spotted and interpreted Mycroft's messages, they won't think to look for a reply from me. **(Tearing out the note and handing it to Harriet)** Now, before you deliver those, I need to go through my plan with you both.

Harriet: You already have a plan?

Watson: He always has a plan, my dear.

Holmes: Better to be prepared, hey what? Now, **(Looks around furtively)** Gather round and listen carefully.

(The three get into a huddle and freeze for a moment. After a pause, Watson moves into a spotlight front and centre. Harriet and Holmes remain in a frozen pose. The lights dim)

Watson: **(Addressing the audience)** And so, the game was afoot, as Sherlock liked to say. Harriet went off to see Lestrade, I to place the advertisement, and Sherlock to make preparations for the execution of his plan.

For myself, I admit, I was a little nervous. Sherlock's plan did seem a little risky, after all, and I knew that whatever Moriarty and Lady Marshal were up to, it wasn't simple industrial espionage. In addition, my head was still spinning with the thought of secret messages and codes and all of that. **(He pauses in thought for a moment)** Huh, astonishing. Until this day, I had absolutely no idea that such secret messages existed. Had you? **(He searches the audience for a moment and then turns and clicks his fingers)**

(Harriet and Sherlock exit quickly. The Stagehands enter and remove the settee, etc. When that is cleared they return with the park bench and place it front and centre. They stand with hand behind their backs. Watson turns, clicks his fingers and exits stage right. The Stagehands nod and exit stage left. Blackout)

Scene 2 – The Park

(Lights fade up. Lady Marshal is sitting on the bench, clutching a handbag and looking around impatiently. Moriarty enters stage right carrying a newspaper)

Moriarty: **(Sitting next to Lady Marshal)** Sorry, I'm late. Had to stop off to buy this. **(He holds up the newspaper)**

(Lady Marshal Gives him a look)

Moriarty: Are you alright?

Marshal: I have been waiting some time.

Moriarty: Yes, well, as I said, I needed to get one of these. **(He opens up the paper and begins to scour its contents)**

Marshal: James! Must you always have to stare at that damned newspaper?

Moriarty: **(Closes the paper and turns to her)** You're not alright are you? You seem very agitated. You're not having second thoughts are you?

Marshal: **(Nervously and fidgeting with her handbag)** No, of course not.

Moriarty: **(Leaning towards her a little)** Look, you hired me to try and improve the reputation and faltering financial status of Marshal Industries, did you not?

Marshal: Of course but... well, this scheme of yours... well, it's rather bold to say the least.

Moriarty: But, to achieve our goals we must be bold. Besides, **(Looking around to make sure they are not being overheard)** as I have explained, it's easy money. Our foreign clients are going to pay handsomely when we deliver the package. Very handsomely indeed.

Marshal: Yes, I understand that but... well, to kidnap a senior official from British Intelligence and then handing him over to a foreign power? It's nothing short of treason is it not?

Moriarty: **(Placing his hand on hers in a reassuring manner)** Only if we get caught. **(He smiles at her)** And we won't. Trust me.

Marshal: **(Taking a deep breath)** Hmm, I suppose I have little choice now.

Moriarty: Believe me, I have everything in hand. Once we have him, he'll be out of the country before anyone knows anything about it.

Marshal: **(Still not sure)** If you say so.

Moriarty: I do say so. Now... **(Returning his attention to the contents of the newspaper)** I need to study this.

Marshal: Really?

Moriarty: Really. You see, Arabella, this is not just a newspaper but, also, a well-used means of communication.

Marshal: How do you mean?

Moriarty: **(Turning the paper so that she can see)** Look here.

Marshal: The Personal Column?

Moriarty: Indeed. For in these few columns we see far more than in the rest of the newspaper...

(Lady Marshal looks at him curiously)

Moriarty: We are privy to the personal lives of the masses: wants, desires, needs, loves... *secrets!*

Marshal: **(Leaning in so that she can read, too)** Intriguing.

Moriarty: **(Wide-eyed at something he's spotted)** Very.

Marshal: James? What is it?

Marshal: Only this... "Reminder: Old school arm-wrestling club reunion! Tonight. 2AX."

Marshal: But, what does that mean?

Moriarty: It means, Lady Marshal, that we are about to catch out prey.

Marshal: Really? I'm sorry, I don't see how. **(She leans in to read it)** What has some arm-wrestling club got to do with anything?

Moriarty: Ahah! Not just any old arm-wrestling club but a *school* arm-wrestling club! **(Turns to her)** You see, when Mycroft and his brother, Sherlock, were at school together, they formed an arm-wrestling club.

Marshal: And you think this is what this refers to? Couldn't it just be coincidence?

Moriarty: Possibly... but, when you link it to the rest of the message...

Marshal: **(Reading aloud)** The rest of it? But it just says '2AX'. Some sort of club, I would suppose.

Moriarty: Ha, but you would suppose wrongly. You see, if you read it not as '2 A X' but as 'two a cross' it leads you to this. **(He slides his finger across the page)**

Marshal: Another message? **(She reads aloud again)** "St Peter and St Paul's: midnight mass, tonight." **(Excitedly)** He wants to meet up at the church at midnight tonight!

Moriarty: Precisely! **(Closing the paper)** And I think it would be very remiss of us if we didn't arrange a little welcoming party, don't you?

Marshal: Absolutely!

(Blackout as Moriarty and Lady Marshal exit. The Stagehands enter stage left and remove the bench)

Scene 3 – outside St Peter and St Paul's

(Midnight. The stage is completely bare. SFX: hoot of an owl and then a church clock striking midnight. As the Lights come up to dim, we see a lone figure standing upstage centre. He wears a wide-brimmed hat, pulled down slightly to hide his face, and a heavy overcoat with large collars which are pulled up around his neck and face. It is Watson disguised as Mycroft Holmes. In one pocket of his coat he has a torch and in the other a pistol. There is a muffled bang up stage right)

Watson: (He tries to disguise his voice) Sherlock? Sherlock is that you.

Holmes: (Off stage) Mycroft? (He enters, upstage right) Mycroft! Thank goodness I found you.

(They shake hands)

Watson: Indeed. And thank you for helping.

Sherlock: Not at all, old man. Brothers in arms and all that.

Watson: Or, in this case, brothers in arm-wrestling.

(They both chuckle. There is sound off, downstage left. Moriarty enters followed by Lady Marshal. Moriarty has a torch in one hand and a pistol in the other)

Moriarty: (Shining a torch on Watson and Holmes and covering them with the pistol) Well, well. Isn't this a touching, brotherly reunion?

Sherlock: Moriarty! And you've brought your accomplice in crime with you, I see.

Marshal: Mr Holmes.

Moriarty: (Cockily) Mr Holmeses, I think you'll find, Lady Marshal.

Marshal: (Approaching Watson) So, you must be the famous Mycroft I've heard so much about?

Watson: Must I?

Moriarty: Come now, Mycroft, no need to be so shy.

Watson: Ah, but appearances can be deceiving, Professor.

Moriarty: Oh, you know me, do you? I'm flattered.

Watson: I wouldn't be if I were you... flattered, that is.

Holmes: So, Moriarty, what is it you want, exactly?

Moriarty: Well, that's an interesting question. You see, we had planned, originally, to take your brother there but now... well, two for the price of one, as it were.

Watson: And where exactly did you think you would be taking me?

Moriarty: Oh, dear fellow, choices, choices. You wouldn't believe how many foreign powers would be willing to pay a lofty sum to get their hands on you and what you know.

Watson: Huh, I probably would, actually.

Moriarty: And as for you Sherlock. Well, I wonder how many people you have helped put away would be willing to pay to get their hands on you? Mind you, I must admit, I am a little disappointed in your performance in this case.

Sherlock: Oh, really? I'm so sorry. In what way have I disappointed?

Moriarty: **(Waving the gun at him)** Well, look at you. I mean, not only did you walk yourself right into a trap but you brought your brother along with you.

Sherlock: Ah, but the game isn't over, yet.

Moriarty: Game? You think this is a game? Well, if it is, you have played rather poorly, my friend. I mean, the pair of you. Those oh so obvious notices in the personal column; rather amateurish, don't you think? All that tosh about your 'arm-wrestling club' and the midnight mass. Really? I had expected better from the great *Sherlock Holmes!*

Sherlock: And what about you, Lady Marshal? Have we disappointed you?

Marshal: Well, I must admit, I had not expected to outwit you so easily. Not after what the professor had told me about you, at least.

Sherlock: But, as I said, the game's not over yet.

Moriarty: **(A little impatiently)** Oh, for goodness sake. Stop it with 'the game's not Over' and just admit it; you've been outwitted by a better brain.

Watson: So that's what this is about, is it? You thought you could outwit the greatest criminal mind alive?

Moriarty: Thought? Ah, such brotherly support. How touching. Isn't it blatantly obvious that I have outwitted him? I mean, I am the one standing here holding you both hostage, am I not?

Watson: Well, yes, I cannot deny that is true but... well, I think the endgame revolves around just *who you think* you are holding hostage?

Moriarty: **(A little thrown)** What? What are you talking about?

Sherlock: I think that what my... err... brother is referring to is what he said earlier, appearances can be deceiving. You see, it would appear that, whilst you clearly spotted and interpreted Mycroft's messages, you failed to spot mine in the evening edition.

Moriarty: What?

Watson: Yes, the one where Sherlock here wrote: The School Players are happy to announce the role of Tiny in their performance of The Midnight Hour will be performed by the understudy, due to reverse part of the original actor.

Moriarty: But what does that even mean?

Sherlock: Well, I'm sure you would have been able to work it out if you had spotted it: School Players?

Moriarty: **(Agitated but wanting to solve the riddle)** Well, that's you and Mycroft, obviously.

Sherlock: And, happy to announce the role of Tiny in their performance of The Midnight Hour will be performed by the understudy, due to reverse part of the original actor.

Moriarty: **(Thinking)** Happy to announce... Why, of course, you are the understudy and, no, that doesn't make sense.... And the reverse part? Trap! You reverse the word part and it spells trap!

Sherlock: Exactly, well done. And the understudy? You were so close but it doesn't mean me. **(He turns and indicates Watson)**

Watson: **(Turns down the collar on his coat and removes the hat)** Tadah!

Moriarty: **(Shattered)** What the...? You're not...!

Marshal: That's Doctor Watson!

Moriarty: **(Angry)** I know who it is, madam.

Marshal: You fool! You led us straight into this!

Moriarty: No! It's your fault. Making me rush arrangements. I've not had enough time. I told you that.

Marshal: Oh, that's right, put the blame on me.

Watson: **(During the above, he has removed the torch and pistol from his pockets and now points them at the arguing couple)** Ahem! I hate to interrupt your err... business meeting but I think you need to consider surrendering.

Moriarty: **(Noticing the gun and turning his back on Homes and Watson)** Oh, I think not, Doctor. What do you think will happen; you shoot me, without me getting one of you first?

Sherlock: **(Withdraws a pistol from his pocket)** Two against one, I'm afraid, Professor. **(Triumphantly)** Now, the game really is up!

(Moriarty turns his torch off and shoots. Watson drops his torch, which goes out. Blackout. There are several more shots followed by a pause. SFX: a distant police whistle)

Sherlock: **(Has found Watson's torch in the blackout and turns it on Watson who is lying on the ground)** John! John, are you alright?

Watson: **(Sitting up and holding his shoulder)** Yes. Yes, I think so. Just winged me. The blighter! Did we get him?

Sherlock: **(Stands and turns the torch around the stage. It lands on Lady Marshal who lies on the ground)** I'm afraid that It looks like he got away but Lady Marshal seems to have been hit.

Watson: **(Upset)** Oh, no! Surely it can't have been one of us?

Sherlock: **(Examining Lady Marshal)** No, I'm sure not. She's been shot in the back.

Watson: The bounder!

Sherlock: Indeed. Probably wanted to eliminate a possible witness.

Watson: What a coward.

(SFX. Police whistle, close by)

Sherlock: Ah, here come the reinforcements.

Watson: Huh, late as usual.

(Harriet, Lestrade and a couple of officers run on)

Harriet: **(Seeing Watson on the floor, runs over to him)** John! You're injured!

Watson: Oh, just a scratch. I've had worse.

Harriet: You've been shot!

Watson: You are kind of stating the obvious, my dear, now help me up would you?

Harriet: **(Helping him to his feet)** Honestly, you two. Why didn't you wait for us?

Lestrade: Yes, gentlemen, we've had words about this sort of thing before. You should leave it to the professionals.

Sherlock: Not wishing to offend, Lestrade, but, had we waited for you, I fear that we both might have either been kidnapped or shot.

Harriet: Well, John has been shot!

Watson: Oh, do stop fussing Harriet. I'll be fine.

Lestrade: **(Going over to Lady Marshal)** Hmm. Unlike this poor soul, by the looks of it.

Watson: Indeed. It would appear that Moriarty shot her before he fled, in order to get rid of a possible witness.

Lestrade: Huh. Sounds like a bit of a bounder.

Watson: Exactly, what I said. Might be an idea to get some officers to the ports and railway stations.

Lestrade: **(Giving Sherlock a look)** Yes, thank you, Doctor, I had already thought of that.

Sherlock: Hmm. To little avail, I fear. He's not only a slippery character with little conscience but intelligent to boot. I doubt he's going to take the more obvious forms of evading capture.

Lestrade: Heartless and intelligent? A dangerous criminal then.

Sherlock: Indeed, Inspector. One of the worst kind, and, the trouble is... I have a strong suspicion that that is not the last we will see of Professor James Moriarty.

(Lights Fade. Curtain. The End)

Properties

ACT I

Scene 1

- Two comfortable chair and settee at a slight angle to each other yet facing the audience (Stagehands)
- A coffee table in front in the centre of this seating arrangement (Stagehands)
- A newspaper (Stagehand)
- A hand bag (Arabella)
- An envelope with letter inside (Arabella)
- Tea tray, with 3 cups and saucers, teapot, etc. (Mrs Hudson)

Scene 2

- A park bench (Stagehands)
- A newspaper (Moriarty)

Scene 3:

- Two comfortable chair and settee at a slight angle to each other yet facing the audience (Stagehands)
- A coffee table in front in the centre of this seating arrangement (Stagehands)
- A newspaper (Stagehand)
- A hand bag (Arabella)
- Tea tray, with 3 cups and saucers, teapot, etc. (Mrs Hudson)

ACT II

Scene 1:

- Two comfortable chair and settee at a slight angle to each other yet facing the audience (Stagehands)
- A coffee table in front in the centre of this seating arrangement (Stagehands)
- A newspaper (Watson)
- A hand bag (Arabella)
- Tea tray, with 3 cups and saucers, teapot, etc. (Stagehands)
- A letter in an envelope. (Holmes)
- Notebook and pencil. (Watson)

Scene 2

- A park bench (Stagehands)
- A newspaper (Moriarty)
- A handbag (Lady Marshall)

Scene 3

- A pistol (Watson)
- A torch (Watson)
- A pistol (Holmes)
- A torch (Moriarty)
- A pistol (Moriarty)

Sound Effects

Act I

Scene 1

- A doorbell

Scene 3

- A knock at the door

Act II

Scene 3

- Sounds of an owl and then a church clock striking midnight
- A distant police whistle
- A close police whistle

Production Notes

- It is intended that the play can be performed with as little set and properties as possible; basically, the stage can be plane black.
- To add to this atmosphere, stagehands should be dressed in black and, preferably, wear white gloves.
- It is the job of the stagehands bring on/remove the appropriate pieces of set as quickly and smoothly as possible.
- In fact, the stagehands are part of the performance.
- The Stagehands also double as Police Constables in the final scene.
- The role of Inspector Le Strade can be played by an individual actor or, again, one of the Stagehands.
- The “**window**” is, of course, imaginary.
- Although, by name, roles sound male or female specific, there is no reason why they could not be played by male or female actors.
- The play is written in two acts but, if desired, a company could cut the interval and just run it as a one acter.