

NICHOLAS MEYER'S THE SEVEN-PER-CENT SOLUTION

THE ASTOUNDING JOINT ADVENTURE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES AND SIGMUND FREUD

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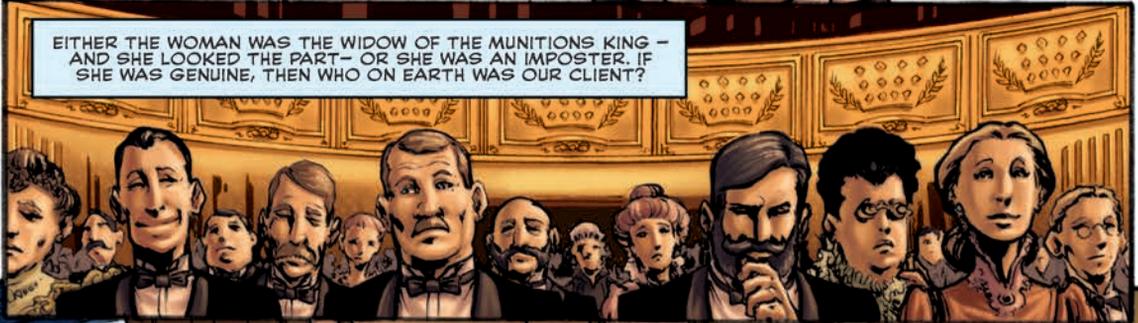


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WHATEVER INTEREST THE PERFORMANCE HELD FOR ME WAS EXPLODED BY THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE WOMAN IN BARON VON LEINSDORF'S BOX AS HIS WIDOW.



EITHER THE WOMAN WAS THE WIDOW OF THE MUNITIONS KING - AND SHE LOOKED THE PART - OR SHE WAS AN IMPOSTER. IF SHE WAS GENUINE, THEN WHO ON EARTH WAS OUR CLIENT?



ONCE RETURNED TO FREUD'S HOME, THE DOCTOR OFFERED US BRANDY AND CIGARS, BUT HOLMES CONTENTED HIMSELF WITH A LUMP OF SUGAR. WE WERE SETTLED IN OUR CHAIRS...



...WHEN HOLMES SUDDENLY EXCUSED HIMSELF.

FORGIVE ME...



DOCTOR, I THINK YOU HAD BETTER COME WITH ME.





FREUD CHOSE NOT TO ALLUDE TO THE INCIDENT. INSTEAD, HE RELATED TO HOLMES OUR ENCOUNTER WITH THE YOUNG BARON AT THE MAUMBERG.

NO BACKHAND? THAT IS SUGGESTIVE...

COME NOW, HOLMES... HAVE YOU COME TO ANY CONCLUSIONS ABOUT OUR CASE?

ONLY THE OBVIOUS ONES, AND THEY MUST REMAIN PROVISIONAL...

HOW WILL THEY BE CONFIRMED?

IN COURT, I FEAR. OUR OPPONENTS HAVE BEEN CLEVER.

AND NATURE HAS COME TO THEIR AID WITH A WITNESS WHOSE TESTIMONY WOULD BE SUSPECT IF NOT TOTALLY INVALID.

MY GRASP OF EUROPEAN POLITICS IS NOT PROFOUND, DR. FREUD, COULD YOU ASSIST ME?

IN WHAT WAY?

SOME GENERAL INFORMATION. PRINCE OTTO VON BISMARCK IS ALIVE, IS HE NOT?

I BELIEVE SO.

BUT HE IS NO LONGER GERMANY'S CHANCELLOR?

NOT FOR NEARLY A YEAR.

AH.

BUT LOOK HERE, HERR HOLMES, WHAT HAS VON BISMARCK TO DO WITH--

IS IT POSSIBLE YOU DO NOT SEE?

A EUROPEAN WAR IS BREWING, THAT MUCH IS EVIDENT.

OF MONSTROUS PROPORTIONS, IF I READ THE SIGNS ARIGHT.



HOW CAN YOU INFER THIS FROM WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN TODAY?

FROM THE RAPPORT BETWEEN BARONESS VON LEINSDORF AND HER STEPSON.

BUT I DID NOT OBSERVE ANY PARTICULAR RAPPORT.

PRECISELY.

DOCTOR FREUD, IS THERE AN OFFICE OF REGISTRY IN VIENNA WHERE WILLS ARE ON FILE?

WILLS? WHY, YES, OF COURSE.



THEN I SHOULD BE OBLIGED IF YOU WOULD GO THERE TOMORROW AND TELL ME WHO CONTROLS THE BULK OF BARON VON LEINSDORF'S ESTATE.

I HAVE A PATIENT AT TEN.

OUR DAY HAS BEEN LONG, AND THE SUCCEEDING ONES PROMISE TO BE LONGER, I THINK IT TIME TO RETIRE.



WILL YOU BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL YOU THAT NOT ONE BUT MILLIONS OF LIVES ARE AT STAKE?

VERY WELL. AND WHAT WILL YOU DO?



CAN OUR CLIENT TRAVEL TOMORROW WITHIN THE CITY, DO YOU THINK? I SHOULD LIKE HER TO MEET SOMEONE.

I DON'T SEE WHY NOT.



I TOO WAS EXHAUSTED, BUT MY BRAIN KEPT RACING. A EUROPEAN WAR! MILLIONS OF LIVES! OFTEN I HAD BEEN ASTOUNDED BY HOLMES'S AMAZING POWERS, BUT NEVER HAD I SEEN HIM INFER SO MUCH ON THE BASIS OF SO LITTLE.

AT BREAKFAST, WE WERE ON THE POINT OF PARTING COMPANY WHEN A MESSENGER ARRIVED WITH A TELEGRAM FOR HOLMES. HE PERUSED IT GREEDILY BEFORE POCKETING IT, WITHOUT COMMENT.

OUR PLANS ARE UNCHANGED.

AND NOW, WATSON, LET US BE ON OUR WAY AS WELL.

WE PROCEEDED TO THE HOSPITAL, WHERE A NOTE IN FREUD'S HANDWRITING SECURED US THE CUSTODY OF THE PATIENT. SHE ACCOMPANIED US WITHOUT RESISTANCE. HOLMES WAS UNWILLING TO DIVULGE THE NATURE OF OUR ERRAND IN FRONT OF OUR MUTE PASSENGER...

ALL IN GOOD TIME, WATSON.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT DOCTOR FREUD TO FIND AT THE REGISTRY?

WHAT I KNOW HE WILL FIND.

DO YOU RECALL SEEING THAT GENTLEMAN RECENTLY, WATSON?

YES, BUT I CAN'T FOR THE LIFE OF ME THINK WHERE, HOLMES. WHOSE HOUSE IS THIS?

