
The Letter

Posted by eagle1r - 2010/01/08 02:02

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The following day was dull and foggy. The Hall was surrounded by heavy, low clouds, which opened now and then to show the grim, cold moor and its wet, grey rocks. The weather made us miserable. It was difficult to be cheerful when we felt danger all around us. I thought of Sir Charles' death, and the awful sound of the hound, which I had now heard twice. Holmes did not believe that there was a supernatural hound. But facts are facts, and I had heard a hound. Was there a huge hound living on the moor? If so, where could it hide? Where did it get its food? Why was it never seen by day? It was almost as difficult to accept a natural explanation as a supernatural explanation.

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That morning Sir Henry and Barrymore argued about Selden, the escaped prisoner. Barrymore said that it was wrong to try to catch Selden.

'But the man is dangerous,' said Sir Henry. 'He'll do any thing. Nobody is safe until he is in prison again. We must tell the police.'

'I promise he won't break into any house,' said Barrymore, 'and he won't cause any trouble. In a few days he will catch a boat for South America. Please don't tell the police about him. If you tell the police, my wife and I will be in serious trouble.'

'What do you say, Watson?' asked Sir Henry, turning to me.

'I don't think he will break into houses, or cause trouble. If he did, the police would know where to look for him and would catch him. He's not a stupid man.'

'I hope you're right,' said Sir Henry. 'I'm sure we're breaking the law. But I don't want to get Barrymore and his wife into trouble, so I shall not tell the police. I shall leave Selden in peace.', ffxi gil,

Barrymore could not find the words to thank Sir Henry enough. Then he said: 'You have been so kind to us that I want to do something for you in return. I have never told any one else. I know something more about poor Sir Charles' death.'

Sir Henry and I jumped up at once.

'Do you know how he died?' Sir Henry asked.

'No, sir, I don't know that, but I know why he was waiting at the gate. He was going to meet a woman.'

'Sir Charles was meeting a woman? Who was the woman?'

'I don't know her name,' Barrymore said, 'but it begins with L.L.'

'How do you know this, Barrymore?' I asked.

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'Well, Sir Charles got a letter on the morning of the day he died. It was from Newtown, and the address was in a woman's writing. I forgot all about it, but some time after Sir Charles died my wife was cleaning the fireplace in his study. She found a letter. Most of it was burned, but the bottom of one page was not burned. On it was written: "Please, please, burn this letter, and be at the gate by ten o'clock. L.L." The paper fell into pieces as my wife went to move it. We don't know who L.L. is, but if you could find out, you might learn more about Sir Charles' death. We haven't told anyone else. We felt it would not be good for poor, kind Sir Charles. But we thought we ought to tell you, Sir Henry.'

The Barrymores left us and Sir Henry turned to me. 'If we can find L.L., the mystery may be at an end,' he said. 'What do you think we should do, Watson?'

'I must write to Holmes at once,' I said, and I went straight to my room and wrote a letter to Holmes, which gave him all the details of Barrymore's story.

On the following day heavy rain fell without stopping. I put on my coat and went for a long walk on the moor. I thought of Selden out on the cold moor in this weather. And I thought of the other man, the mysterious watcher.

As I walked, Dr Mortimer drove past me. He stopped and said he would take me back to the Hall.

'I expect you know almost everybody living near here,' I said. 'Do you know a woman whose names begin with the letters L.L.?', wedding dresses,

Dr Mortimer thought for a minute, and then he said: 'Yes, Mrs Laura Lyons. She lives in Newtown.'

'Who is she?' I asked.

'She's Mr Frankland's daughter.'

'What, old Frankland who has the large telescope?'

'Yes,' said Dr Mortimer. 'Laura married a painter called Lyons who came to paint pictures of the moor. But he was cruel to her, and after a while he left her. Her father will not speak to her, because she married against his wishes. So her husband and her father have made her life very unhappy.'
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