

This story is from one of my later years of living with Sholmes. It was one of the few cases before the Sign of Five, in which I eventually made my departure. The date was 24/5/88 and it was a very beautiful day out.

I had grown accustomed to going on walks when it wasn't raining, which was very rare at this time in London. Much to my protestation, Herlock Sholmes yet again decided to stay indoors. As I walked down the stairs I passed a curious man who wore a lightweight green coat with no pockets, a navy blue hat with letters "AL" and held a dark red carpet bag in his left hand. I looked back and saw that he was turning the knob to the door to our room so I inquired on what he was doing.

"I have an appointment with Sholmes," said the man. He glanced somewhat worried at his carpet bag. That made me slightly curious to what was inside it, no doubt important for the appointment.

"Oh, well I better accompany you" I responded, "I am his colleague Dr. Matson". He looked back at me, he seemed vaguely suspicious.

"Nice to meet you Matson" said the man, he held out his hand for a handshake and it was then I noticed several cuts that lined his palms, a few were recent. A bit too focused on the cuts, I didn't shake his hand for a few moments. I waited only a couple of seconds but he let down his hand quickly. In a hurry he continued to move forward and opened the door to our flat.

"Back from your walk so soon Matson?" said Herlock, "and I see you've brought a visitor, Please sit down" I pulled up a chair next to Sholmes, and the man pulled a chair opposite to him. The man seemed slightly relieved that I was not lying, and carefully laid down his carpet bag on the floor, the slow lowering caused some strain on his left arm. Herlock pulled out many newspapers and skimmed past them. He had a habit of getting subscriptions to many Newspapers all over London so he could keep up to date on what was happening.

"Would you like a pipe Allen Lewis? I would like to discuss the matter of transporting your Jewel." Said Herlock. The man who I now presumed as "Allen Lewis" had an expression of shock on his face.

"Who told you I was coming?" he exclaimed rather loudly, taking his hand bag off the ground and into his lap. Herlock looked amused.

"You showed me yourself". Allen's expression had turned from shock to curiosity.

"I have never spoken to you before" Said Allen "I heard about you from one of my friends".

"There is no need for you to have told me". "First I can see that in your handbag is an important object of some weight, based on how you were so careful to set it down and suspicious of people taking it. The weight of course can be seen by the strain on your left arm as you lowered it. As a light object would have caused no strain. Now the object in your hand bag is the only object you brought because your coat has no pockets to store anything else and your cuts are recent

so therefore the object must have caused you cuts. So what important objects that need to be handled carefully, are heavy for their size, and have many sharp edges? A cut jewel of course. But carpet bags are not normally held by aristocrats and that seems to be a very large Jewel, so you have either stolen it, been gifted it, or you are tasked with transporting it. And in all 3 you require me to transport or protect the jewel. Also your hat has your initials on it. They cannot be a company name because they are printed on the outside not the inside. So I checked the newspapers for a theft and couldn't find any, So I checked for someone with the initials 'AL' in relation to a jewel and found this"

The paper read "The priceless golden sapphire is being shipped to auction, trusted friend of the auctioneer and former police officer Allen Lewis is to be tasked with the transport of it".

"That's exactly the problem," said Allen. "Everyone knows that it is me protecting it so that they just need to follow my train or boat and catch up to me. So I have created a plan to guard this gem". He paused for a moment.

"Please continue".

"So I have instructed one of my closest friends to guard it".

"Okay then what is the issue?" Said Herlock.

"I'm not sure if I can trust him".

"Then pick someone else."

"I'm not sure if I would be able to trust them.", "that is why I have told a number of people including you, so that you may report on those people".

"Well what if they all work together to sell it and share the profits?".

"That is why they won't know the Identity of every other person".

"Then how will they report the theft?".

"Each person shall only know of a few others" . "I have entrusted my closest friend to know all but 1, and the person whom I trust the least to only know 1 person". "A sort of deadlock"

"Interesting" stated Herlock, looking absolutely delighted "And how many people shall I know of?".

Allen, a bit offputted by Sherlock's delight, stated "Two" in a rather suspicious manner.

"Perfect, May you write down their names?". And he obliged. Neither me nor Herlock had heard of these people, and he could not find them in his index.

*Harry Sharsfield, Hudson Lear.*

His handwriting was slightly messy but was still perfectly understandable.

“Just one more thing” he said “Take The Flying Scotsman in two days at 14:00 The Jewel shall be in the coach, please refer to it by the code name ‘Shovel’ if I would like to make any subsequent updates.” .

“Alright” said Herlock, and Allen left the room. He was likely on his way to an earlier train, we never saw him again or had known what had become of him.

Two days later we walked down to the station. Funnily enough it wasn’t raining that day either, but the sky was a lot less clear, and the streets were wet. The station didn’t seem very busy. As we arrived at the train I asked Herlock which car we should take. He opened his mouth to answer, but then paused upon noticing the words “SHOVEL, 9” on the right side of the stone wall.

“I believe that we should enter the ninth car”, Said Sholmes. I agreed, though it seemed like something else was on his mind.

The car was wonderfully decorated with a checkerboard pattern on the floor, there were 7 squares in between the rows of compartments, and continued through the compartments. However, through some error of tiling, the pattern was cut off halfway at the walls. There were 6 compartments in the car, the one on the far right read “SECTIONED OFF”, across from it a family of 4 stayed. Next to them was our car, and across from our compartment was a lady with a black dress. We talked to her and she said her name was Tracy Lewis.

“Well Sholmes” I said “She must be his wife or sister”. Herlock had a grimaced look on his face and pulled us into our compartment.

“I don’t like this Matson”, “Why should Allen invite these people here all together. They must have deduced by now the people here are the ones who know the location, but Allen made it clear that he did not want everyone to know every other person, otherwise scheming may take place”.

“Well Herlock, not everyone can all get together to split the profits because we are here, and can report everyone”. Herlock opened his mouth to speak but before he could get any words out a loud bang echoed throughout the train car. We immediately got out of our seats and rushed to see what was happening. Everyone left their compartment except for Tracy and the empty one. Someone inside opened the door. And the father of the family was already out.

“You can’t enter a crime scene!” someone shouted.

“I have full authority to do so, I am a private detective”. The man backed down. Tracy lay on the left bench slumped over. She was dead. The number 4 was written in her blood, and she had a bullet hole in the back of her head. The only connection to other places in the compartments was the vent between the neighboring compartments, and the door. The man who was in the compartment said

that they were talking then bang, she was shot. Me and Sholmes searched Luke and the compartment. We found no weapon.

“We must all write down our names and what we were doing I shall go first”

Herlock Sholmes, in Compartment, across from murder.

**RAGLAN LESKO, OUT OF COMPARTMENT.**

HARRY SHARFIELD, IN COMPARTMENT ADJACENT TO MURDER.

*Luke Panzani, sitting across from Tracy.*

“Raglan?” Sholmes called, the man with the family of four turned his head. “Can you confirm that no one else was outside”

“Yes.” There was a long pause.

“Well I feel that everyone here can name at least one person on this list” Said Herlock.

“Yes, I know Luke”, said Harry.

“I don’t quite follow,” said Raglan.

“Well I know you and Harry” said Luke “as well as Tracy”.

“Did anyone know Raglan?” I exclaimed. Everyone said no, and Raglan looked bewildered to what was going on.

“I know there may be some confusion,” Said Herlock, glancing at Raglan. But it is all too complicated to explain right now and I fear that another person will die soon. I have no need for anyone else right now and will call upon you if I require additional information. I want no one to leave unless explicitly stated.” After his speech everyone went back to their compartments, including us.

“Well if you ask me Sholmes it should be that Luke fellow” I said.

“And Matson, I shall take that with the utmost seriousness once I inquire on your opinion.”

“I know who it is Matson, and I suggest we act quickly, we have waited enough time.” It is obvious that this person wants to kill everyone else in the car so that no one can report the attempted theft.

**Tune in next week to see whodunit.**