

The adventure of the beryl coronet essay sample



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Introduction

The detective stories written by Arthur Conan Doyle have recently regained their popularity. The reason for this is in the fact that Doyle's short stories about Sherlock Holmes describe the unlimited human talents.

Simultaneously, Sherlock Holmes is a usual person, with his human weaknesses and his own likes and preferences. *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet* is another proof of not only Holmes' talents, but of the Doyle's astonishing ability to turn the reader into the participant of the described events. *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet* is the description of the human criminal detection talents.

The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet written by Arthur Conan Doyle tells a story of a prominent banker. The man arrives to Holmes' house, looking wary, distressed, and creating an impression of being insane. Interestingly, Watson had first thought the man to be crazy. The banker was one of the most famous members of aristocratic circles of London at that time; his banking institution was dealing with loan activity. He had to loan a large sum of money to a man with the "highest, noblest, most exalted" name in England (Conan Doyle 107). The situation seemed to be difficult for the debtor and he urgently needed the requested fifty thousand pounds. In return, and as a guarantee, the debtor whose name the banker avoided mentioning provided the beryl coronet - the treasure of national importance. The banker could not afford losing this greatest treasure and had to take it to his house, where he thought he could ensure that it was safe. His family consisted of him, his son, and his niece whom he had adopted and whom he considered to be his "right hand".

He could not but share his secret with them. Later at night the banker caught his son in his room, with the coronet in his hand. To his terror, three small beryls were missing. The young man was taken by police and the banker saw no other way but to ask Sherlock Holmes for assistance. As it later appeared, the banker's niece had created a plan of stealing the coronet. She had a love affair with a man known for his gambling habits; she was totally under his influence. Opposite to the banker's confidence that she could never betray him, the young lady could potentially cause a scandal of national scale. The banker's son caught both his cousin and her lover, when they tried to steal the coronet. During the fight he was able to grasp the coronet, but the three beryls left in the hands of Sir George Burnwell, the niece's lover. Sherlock Holmes was able to return them having agreed with Sir George Burnwell to purchase the stones for 1000 pounds each.

The readers' reaction to stories about Sherlock Holmes is usually similar: they are fascinated by Conan Doyle's narrative, and I have not become an exception. However, I have also tried to go deeper and to solve the mystery of Sherlock Holmes' popularity, or better, unusualness. I am not new with this idea, but I was always interested in how Holmes (or better, Conan Doyle) was successful in his investigations. Several authors wrote about cognitive abilities of Sherlock Holmes (Berg, Snyder). I would state that one of Holmes' phrases in *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet* has become the central definition of his strategy to me: "When you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth" (Conan Doyle 111). The improbability of such truth is evident in the story: the banker could never expect his niece to betray him by stealing the coronet.

It is even more interesting to closely consider Holmes' talents, as created by Doyle. Before I read *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet*, the image of Sherlock Holmes in my mind had traditionally been associated with abnormal and supernatural human cognitive abilities. Presently, my opinion totally coincides with that expressed by Snyder: "Rather than inventing forensic science, the Holmes stories instead presented the science of criminal detection" (106). The unnaturalness of Holmes' investigation abilities turns into the mere set of logic, power of observation and well-developed intuition. In the light of the discussed story, not only Holmes' image has become totally new to me. The story has only added value to the talents of Arthur Conan Doyle as a writer.

A person should have had real talent to depict the simple human characteristics among which logic and intuition took the leading position in such advantageous light. Surely, Snyder states that then Britain needed this character to return its trust to police and investigation procedures (107). According to Berg, the reason of that mistrust was in the well-known Smethurst case, in which the man had been mistakenly accused of death due to improper toxicological tests (449). I would debate the fact that the meaning of Holmes' character is rooted in real historical events in Britain. On the contrary, I view this meaning in the unusual combination of simplicity and complicatedness of Holmes character: with his talents being numerous and even incompatible, he was able to make the process of investigation and discovery easy for reader's understanding. I personally view this simplicity as the initial and the basic reason of Holmes' popularity.

Conclusion

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While reading *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet* for the second time, I was already pushed by the idea to solve the puzzle of Holmes' character. What astonished me was not the unusualness of his talents: being closely considered, they do not seem so unusual anymore. The set of his talents is easily explained in terms of mere logic, intuition and observation. However, this observation has stricken me the most. The talent of observation is rare in contemporary world. One should also note that the talent of observation cannot constitute a full set of talents for a successful detective. The information gathered during observation should be properly analyzed. The unusualness of Holmes' character for me is in the rare combination of different values, which have made him one of the most popular literary detectives in the world fiction.

Works cited

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