

THE SPECKLED BAND
by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Adaptation by Glenn Carlson and Scot Crisp
for One Act Audio Theatre

1 INT. NARRATION

1

SFX: MUSIC UP

WATSON: When reflecting upon the many cases in which I shared the confidence of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I can recall none more disturbing than the one that began on an early April morning back in '83.

WATSON: Holmes was a late riser as a rule, so imagine my surprise when I awoke to find him standing, fully dressed, at the foot of my bed in the rooms we shared then on Baker Street, at only a quarter past seven.

SFX: MUSIC OUT

2 INT. WATSON'S BEDCHAMBER -- MORNING

2

HOLMES: Watson ... Watson!

WATSON: Holmes! What is it then? A fire?

HOLMES: No, a client. It seems that a young lady has arrived in a considerable state of excitement insisting upon a consultation. I presume you wish to dress and follow this from the outset?

WATSON: Most certainly.

BED CLOTHES TOSSED w/ SOUNDS OF DRESSING UNDER

WATSON: What do you know of this young lady?

HOLMES: Nothing particular as of this moment, but when young ladies wander about the metropolis at this hour of the morning, and knock sleepy people up out of their beds, I gather something very pressing is at hand.

2 CONTINUED:

2

WATSON: Indeed.

HOLMES: Mrs. Hudson described her as a young woman, dressed in black, heavily veiled, and at this moment waiting for us in the sitting room. Ready?

WATSON: Yes, quite.

3 INT. BAKER STREET SITTING ROOM -- MORNING

3

SFX: DOOR OPENS

HOLMES: Good morning, Madam, I am Sherlock Holmes. This is my intimate friend and associate, Dr. Watson.

WATSON: Good morning.

HELEN: Good morning. My name is Helen Stoner.

HOLMES: Please, sit down by the fire, Miss Stoner, for I observe that you are shivering.

HELEN: It is not cold which makes me shiver.

HOLMES: What then?

HELEN: It is fear, Mr. Holmes.

HOLMES: You must not fear. We shall soon set matters right. You have come by train this morning, I see.

HELEN: You know me then?

HOLMES: No, but I observe the second half of a return ticket in the palm of your left glove.

HELEN: Oh, yes. I started from home before six and came by first train from Leatherhead to Waterloo. Oh, sir, I can stand this strain no longer, I shall go mad if it continues. The horror of my situation lies in the fact that my fears are so vague, and my suspicions depend so entirely upon small points.

(MORE)

3 CONTINUED:

3

HELEN: And those I turn to merely sooth me
with calming words about my
imagination ... I can tell they
believe this all to be the fancies of
a nervous woman ... I ...

WATSON: Here, Miss Stoner, take some coffee.

SFX: CHINA CUP RATTLES

HELEN: Thank you. I come seeking your
advice Mr. Holmes, for I do not know
how to proceed. My fiancee is
presently in Europe, and not a man of
much financial means, so I have no
money to pay you now, but once I
marry, I will have an income and you
shall then find me most grateful.

HOLMES: Please tell me your story, and leave
nothing out, even if you think it
trivial.

HELEN: Thank you. Well, my sister Julia and
I came to live in Surrey some years
ago with our stepfather, Dr. Grimesby
Roylott, who is the last survivor of
the Roylotts of Stoke Moran.

HOLMES: The name is familiar to me.

HELEN: The family was once quite rich, but
four successive wasteful heirs left
nothing but a few acres of ground and
a two-hundred year old house falling
to ruin. The last squire's only son,
my stepfather, was determined to
avoid the life of an aristocratic
pauper. He obtained an advance from
a relative, took a medical degree,
and left for India where he had quite
a successful practice.

HOLMES: And where he met your widowed mother?

HELEN: Yes. Our father was Major General
Stoner of the Bengal Artillery. I
was only two years old when he died,
and Julia but five.

(MORE)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

3

HELEN: Soon after her remarriage, my mother began speaking of a wish to leave Calcutta, to return to England. I think she found India too full of memories of our father. When we returned, however, Dr. Roylott found it difficult to establish a medical practice in London. Still, my mother had a good income left to her by our father, enough for all our wants, and there seemed no obstacle to our happiness ... then ...

HOLMES: Go on.

HELEN: Then my mother died ... she was killed six years ago in a railway accident. Dr. Roylett then abandoned attempts to establish himself in London and took us to live with him in the ancestral house at Stoke Moran ... and after that such a sad change came over him. He shut himself away in the house and rarely ventured out. And when he did it only seemed to engage in ferocious quarrels with whoever might cross his path.

: But the oddest thing was how he began to disappear for weeks on end, going off to live with the bands of wandering gypsies he allowed to stay on the estate.

HOLMES: Gypsies?

HELEN: Yes. I suppose you could say they are my stepfather's only friends. Everyone gives Stoke Moran a wide berth these days, Mr. Holmes, being not only afraid of the doctor's temper, but also of the exotic animals from India that he allows to freely roam the grounds. Baboons and a cheetah at present.

HOLMES: Interesting.

WATSON: Indeed.

3 CONTINUED: (3)

3

HELEN: You can imagine from what I say that my poor sister Julia and I had no great pleasure in our lives. No servant would stay with us, so we did all the work of the house. She was not yet twenty-five at the time of her death, and yet her hair had already begun to whiten, even as mine has.

HOLMES: Your sister is dead then?

HELEN: Just two years ago. It was such a tragedy. Even though we saw very few people at Stoke Moran, Julia was fortunate to meet and fall in love with a Major of the Marines. They were to be married. I was so happy for her. It was a mere fortnight before the wedding that she died. And now looking back, those events frighten me all the more.

HOLMES: Pray be precise as to the details.

HELEN: On the night of her ... that night Julia was in my room, chatting about wedding plans. She rose to leave but paused at the door and asked: "Helen, have you heard anyone whistle in the dead of night?"

HOLMES: Had you?

HELEN: Never, Mr. Holmes, as I told her. She then asked "Do you think it possible you have whistled in your sleep?" I told her no, I did not think so. It was such an odd question that I asked her to explain.

HOLMES: And ..?

HELEN: She said that during the past nights at three in the morning she had been roused from sleep by a low, clear whistle. I said it was likely coming from the gypsie camp, but she replied that if such were the case, then I would have heard it, too, as our bedroom windows both face the same direction across the lawn.

3 CONTINUED: (4)

3

: She then said it was no matter of great consequence, left my room, and in a few moments I heard her turn the key in the lock of her door.

HOLMES: Indeed. Was it always your custom to lock yourselves in at night?

HELEN: Always.

HOLMES: And why?

HELEN: Well, there were the animals the doctor kept, and with strangers often camping so near the house ... we had no feeling of security unless our doors were locked.

HOLMES: Quite so. And the windows to your bedrooms?

HELEN: We barred the shutters.

HOLMES: Yes, yes. Pray, proceed with your statement.

HELEN: Later that night the weather turned wild with a howling wind, and I had trouble sleeping due to the noise. Suddenly, amidst the sounds of the gale outside, I heard the terrified scream of a woman. I knew it was my sister.

: I sprang from my bed and rushed out the door. I hurried to her room, and just then her door opened and swung inward. I stared horror-stricken, not knowing what was to issue forth. But by the light of the corridor lamp I could see it was my sister, just inside the doorway, her face blanched with terror, her hands groping for help. I ran to her and threw my arms around her, but at that moment her knees seemed to give way and she fell to the ground. She writhed as one in terrible pain.

3 CONTINUED: (5)

3

- : I thought she did not recognize me,
but she looked in my eyes with a
terrible gaze and shrieked out in a
voice which I shall never forget:
"Oh, my God! Helen! It was the
band! The speckled band."
- : I rushed out, calling for my
stepfather, whom I met hastening from
his room in his dressing gown. When
he reached her she was unconscious.
He placed her on the bed, but before
he could even examine her, my sister
sank away and ... died.
- WATSON: I am very sorry.
- HOLMES: One moment. Did you hear any noises
coming from your sister's room?
- HELEN: No. But with the gale blowing
outside and the creakings of an old
house, it would have been difficult
to hear such noises.
- HOLMES: Was your sister dressed?
- HELEN: No, she was in her nightdress.
- HOLMES: Was her room dark when you entered?
- HELEN: No, the lamp was burning. In her
right hand was found a charred match
stump, too.
- HOLMES: So she had struck a light to look
about her when the alarm took place.
That is important, Watson. And what
conclusions did the coroner come to?
- HELEN: Oh. He investigated with great care.
I had seen my sister open the door to
her room, and I presume it was locked
before then. The windows were
shuttered and barred from the inside.
The walls and flooring were examined
and found solid all around. The
chimney is wide but there are bars
reinforcing it all the way up the
flue. It was clear that my sister
was alone when she met her end.
- WATSON: What about poison?

3 CONTINUED: (6)

3

HELEN: She was examined for it, but without success. In the end, the coroner agreed with my stepfather that Julia had perished from some fit of the nervous system that could not be anticipated or prevented.

HOLMES: But you doubt these conclusions.

HELEN: I ... I don't know ... she may have died of nervous shock, but I don't know what could have frightened her so.

HOLMES: Ah, and what did you gather from this allusion to a band, a speckled band?

HELEN: Sometimes I have thought it merely the wild talk of delirium. Other times I think she might have referred to the band of gypsies, who often wear spotted handkerchiefs, but ... well ...

HOLMES: These are very deep waters. Now, Miss Stoner, you must tell me what has frightened you to such an extent that you now travel to London to seek my advice?

HELEN: Just two days ago my stepfather began some repairs, including the outer wall of my bedroom. This has necessitated moving into my sister's chamber, to sleep in her bed ... where she ... (quiet crying again)

WATSON: Miss Stoner?

HELEN: I am all right. (pause) Late last night, as I lie in bed, I heard in the silence the low whistle which had been the herald of my sister's death. I lit the lamp but there was nothing to be seen. I was too shaken to go to bed again, and so I dressed and made my journey here.

HOLMES: You have done wisely. This is a very dark business.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (7)

3

HOLMES: There are many details I wish to know before I decide on a course of action. Yet we have not a moment to lose. If we were to come to Stoke Moran today would it be possible for us to arrive and meet you unseen by anyone on the estate?

HELEN: Well, yes ... I suppose. My stepfather is to be away all day. But to be sure you are not seen by the groundsmen or gypsies, I think it best if you approach the back of the house via the footpath which begins just east of the village.

HOLMES: Excellent. You are not averse to this trip, Watson?

WATSON: By no means.

HOLMES: Then we shall both come. You may expect us early in the afternoon. Watson, if you could show our guest out?

WATSON: Of course.

SFX: CHAIR SCRAPING AND FOOTSTEPS

HELEN: Thank you, gentlemen. My heart is lightened.

SFX: DOOR OPENS

HELEN: I look forward to seeing you this afternoon.

WATSON: Miss Stoner.

SFX: DOOR CLOSES

4 INT. BAKER STREET SITTING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

4

HOLMES: And what do you think of it all, Watson?

WATSON: It seems to me to be a most dark and sinister business.

HOLMES: Dark enough and sinister enough.
(MORE)

4 CONTINUED:

4

HOLMES: Now, let us have a little breakfast, and afterwards I shall walk down to the Commons where I hope to get some data which may help us in this matter.

SFX: MUSIC BRIDGE

5 INT. BAKER STREET SITTING ROOM -- LATER

5

SFX: DOOR OPENS

HOLMES: (off) Watson?!

WATSON: In here, Holmes.

SFX: DOOR CLOSES AND FOOTSTEPS APPROACH

WATSON: Just finishing my notes on our morning meeting. Any luck with you?

HOLMES: Ah, yes. There is much to tell, but it can wait. Gather your things and hail us a cab to Waterloo. And slip your revolver into your jacket pocket, good man.

WATSON: You think it necessary?

HOLMES: That and a toothbrush are all I think we shall need.

SFX: TRAIN WHISTLE AND TRAIN FADE TO

6 EXT. OUTSIDE STOKE MORAN -- AFTERNOON

6

SFX: CLOPPING OF CARRIAGE TO STOP

HOLMES: Here driver. Is this the footpath that leads past the Roylott estate?

DRIVER: 'Tis, sir. You can see the rooftop of Stoke Moran Manor through there.

HOLMES: Excellent. Stop the carriage! Pay the driver, will you Watson?

WATSON: (fade out) There you are, good man.

SFX: CARRIAGE STARTS AND FADES OUT

SFX: MUSIC BRIDGE

*

7 EXT. OUTSIDE STOKE MORAN -- MOMENTS LATER

7

HELEN: Mr. Holmes, I am so pleased to see you.

HOLMES: Good afternoon. You see we have been as good as our word.

HELEN: Yes. Good day, Mr. Watson.

WATSON: Miss Stoner. Fine day, yes.

HOLMES: We must make the best use of our time, so if you will kindly show us the rooms in question. I would examine the outside first.

SFX: WALKING

HELEN: Of course. Just this way. Those are the bedrooms, there.

HOLMES: The one on the left I take it is the room in which you used to sleep?

HELEN: It is. The middle was my sister's, where I am sleeping now. The last, on the right, is my stepfather's.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS STOP

HOLMES: And on the other side of the rooms is the corridor which runs between them?

HELEN: Yes.

HOLMES: There are windows in it, of course?

HELEN: Yes, but very small ones. Too narrow and high for anyone to pass through.

HOLMES: Ah. Now, would you kindly go into your present room and bar your shutters.

HELEN: Certainly.

SFX: WALKING

8 EXT. STOKE MORAN -- CONTINUOUS

8

HOLMES: Watson, do you notice anything odd about the end wall there?

8 CONTINUED:

8

WATSON: I see scaffolding erected ... hmmm
... apart from an excess of lichen
the masonry looks sound, and the wall
appears true and well seated on the
foundation.

HOLMES: Exactly. Do you not find it odd to
find repairs initiated on a perfectly
sound wall?

WATSON: Indeed. Unless this young woman was
meant to change rooms?

HOLMES: Ah! Now that is suggestive!

SFX: SQUEAKING METAL BAR SLIDES INTO PLACE

HOLMES: (loudly) Thank you, Miss Stoner.
Hmmm ... no slit by which a knife can
pass through to lift the bar. The
hinges are well seated, solid iron.
(pushing heavily) Ummph. Ummph.
(breath out) Hum! My theory
certainly presents some difficulties.
No one could pass through these
shutters if they were bolted. Well,
we shall see if the inside throws any
light upon the matter.

SFX: MUSIC BRIDGE

9 INT. STOKE MORAN BEDROOM 1 -- MOMENTS LATER

9

SFX: FOOTSTEPS IN CORRIDOR

WATSON: (fade up) Shall we look into the
first room, Holmes?

HOLMES: No, we shall discover nothing there
to assist in this matter. Let us
focus on the middle chamber (enters)
... ah Miss Stoner, are the
furnishings here as they were when
your sister occupied this room?

HELEN: Yes, I do believe so.

HOLMES: Very good.

Holmes moves about the room examining different things,
making misc. comments as he does so.

9 CONTINUED:

9

HOLMES: Watson, what do you make of that ventilator high on the wall?

WATSON: It seems an ordinary ventilator.

HOLMES: Hmm. (pause) This bell-pull, Miss Stoner, connects to the servant's station?

HELEN: I assume so, Mr. Holmes, but I confess, I have never used it.

HOLMES: I thought not, or you certainly would have noticed. (pulls cord) It's a dummy.

HELEN: Won't it ring?

HOLMES: No, it's not even attached to a wire. It is merely hooked to the wall there beside the ventilator.

WATSON: How peculiar.

HOLMES: I should like to have a look at your stepfather's room now.

HELEN: Of course.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS AND DOOR OPENS

10 INT. STOKE MORAN BEDROOM 2 -- MOMENTS LATER

10

WATSON: Quite spartan furnishings

HELEN: After my mother died, my stepfather had most of the furniture removed. He said he preferred simple surroundings, in the manner of his quarters in Calcutta. He kept only this high backed chair and that bookcase.

WATSON: Complete with extensive articles on tropical diseases and treatments, I note. Ah, there is an impressive collection on animals of the Orient as well.

HOLMES: Hmm? Not unexpected, though, given his years practicing in India ... Tell me, do you keep a dog?

10 CONTINUED:

10

HELEN: No, Mr. Holmes.

HOLMES: Curious then this leash. Perhaps a cat?

HELEN: No. Does one leash a cat?

HOLMES: Perhaps the cheetah that you say prowls the estate ... but actually I was referring to this --

WATSON: A saucer of milk!

HELEN: Most curious.

HOLMES: A cheetah is just a big cat, and yet a saucer of milk does not go far in satisfying its wants, I daresay.

WATSON: Holmes, look here beside the bookcase. Another bell-pull. (pulls) This one does not seem to work, either. Curious.

HOLMES: But not surprising. One last thing, Miss Stoner. Do you know what is in here?

HELEN: The safe? My stepfather's business papers.

HOLMES: You've seen inside, then?

HELEN: Yes ... I can't remember when ... it was some time ago, but it was filled with papers.

HOLMES: I think I have seen enough now. Let us return to the lawn.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS TO OUTSIDE

11 EXT. STOKE MORAN -- AFTERNOON

11

HOLMES: It is very essential, Miss Stoner, that you should absolutely follow my advice in every respect.

HELEN: I shall most certainly do so.

HOLMES: Good.

(MORE)

11 CONTINUED:

11

HOLMES: Tonight you must stay in your old room. Tell no one you are doing so. Take only what you will absolutely need from your present chamber this afternoon. Dr. Watson and I will be staying in your sister's room tonight.

WATSON: Holmes?

SFX: FOOTSTEPS STOP.

HOLMES: Yes. I have left the window open so we may gain entry to the room. I believe I noted an inn across the field there?

HELEN: Yes, that is the Crown Inn.

HOLMES: And your windows would be visible from there at night?

HELEN: I am sure they would.

HOLMES: Then that is where Watson and I will be for the remainder of the day and this evening. I would also ask that you retire early, and burn no light past nine. Do you understand what you are to do, Miss Stoner?

HELEN: Yes.

HOLMES: Do everything I have asked without hesitation for your life certainly depends on compliance. Leave the rest in our hands.

HELEN: Mr. Holmes ... am I ... have you an answer for my sister's death?

HOLMES: I should prefer to have clearer proofs before I speak. Come, Watson, let us make way to the inn.

SFX: MUSIC BRIDGE

12 INT. CROWN INN -- NIGHT

12

HOLMES: Watson ... wake up, Watson.

WATSON: (wakes with start) Huh!

12 CONTINUED:

12

HOLMES: On your feet. It's past twelve, we must be going.

WATSON: Right.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS THEN DOOR OPENS

HOLMES: And don't forget your pistol.

SFX: MUSIC BRIDGE

13 EXT. STOKE MORAN -- NIGHT

13

SFX: NIGHT SOUNDS & WALKING

HOLMES: Do you know, Watson, I had some misgivings about asking you to come tonight. There is a distinct element of danger.

WATSON: When you speak of danger, I can only surmise that you saw more in those rooms than was visible to me.

HOLMES: No, I imagine you saw all that I did, but I fancy that I may have deduced a little more.

WATSON: Apart from the bell-pull I ---

SFX: SUDDEN CRASH OF FOLIAGE & SCREEETCH

WATSON: My God, Holmes! Did you see that?

HOLMES: That was the baboon.

WATSON: Good heavens, I had forgotten. I dare not think of the cheetah. Do you think --

HOLMES: We must be silent now. The least sound would be fatal to our plans.

14 P.O.V. STOKE MORAN -- CONTINUOUS

14

There is the slight sound of Holmes and Watson moving a few more feet towards the house.

HOLMES: Ah, good ... the window is still unlocked

Quiet sound of the window and shutters being opened.

14 CONTINUED:

14

HOLMES: Give a leg up, Watson. One, two,
three ...

Holmes and Watson climb through window and inside bedroom.

15 INT. STOKE MORAN BEDROOM 1 -- MOMENTS LATER

15

HOLMES: (whisper) We must sit without a
light. Do not go to sleep, Watson,
your very life may depend on it.
Have your pistol at the ready in case
it is needed. I will sit on the side
of the bed and you in that chair.

16 INT. STOKE MORAN BEDROOM 1 -- CONTINUOUS

16

There is a quiet suggestion of a chair sliding with someone
taking a seat.

Time passes. Some aural representation of 60-90 minutes
passing. Then:

17 INT. STOKE MORAN BEDROOM 1 -- CONTINUOUS

17

SFX: LOW WHISTLE

WATSON: (whisper) Holmes?

HOLMES: Ssshhh.

WATSON: I believe --

HOLMES: Be still.

SFX: LOW HISSING

A quiet stiffening of bedsheets then a match strike followed
by a sudden cacophony of noise and movement as Holmes beats
about the bed with a cane.

WATSON: Ahhh! Holmes!

HOLMES: You see it, Watson! There!

WATSON: What is going on?

HOLMES: You see it! You SEE IT!

SFX: LOUD WHISTLE REPEATED THREE TIMES
QUICKLY

WATSON: Holmes!

Sudden SCREAM (off) tails to quiet.

17 CONTINUED:

17

WATSON: What on earth!?

HOLMES: Watson! Your pistol! Follow me.

SFX: RUNNING SCRAMBLE. DOOR OPENS.

*

18 INT. STOKE MORAN BEDROOM 2 -- MOMENTS LATER

18*

SFX: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS. DOOR BURSTS OPEN.

*

WATSON: Dr. Roylott!

HOLMES: No! Watson do not move. Roylott is beyond your help. Look! There!

SFX: LOW HISSING

WATSON: A snake!

HOLMES: The speckled band.

WATSON: A snake?

HOLMES: Yes. It is a swamp adder, the deadliest snake in India. He died within ten seconds of being bitten.

WATSON: The doctor!?

HOLMES: Roylott was responsible for Julia Stoner's death and had we not interceded, was set to perpetrate a second heinous act of murder.

WATSON: My word!

HOLMES: Please, if you could step aside ... slowly ... good ... Now, with due care I can slide the loop of this leash over it's head and ... there! Now, back to your den with you.

SFX: LOW THUD THEN CLANK AND SLAM OF IRON
SAFE DOOR.

WATSON: Splendid work, Holmes!

HOLMES: Come, Watson, let us find Miss Stoner some other place of shelter for the night and then inform the county police of what has transpired.

SFX: MUSIC BRIDGE AND FADE UP TRAIN

19 INT. TRAIN CABIN -- DAY

19

HOLMES: Have you about finished your notes, Watson?

WATSON: Yes, nearly. I am still unclear as to the gypsies.

HOLMES: I, too, allowed that erroneous bit of information to confuse the issue. The presence of the gypsies, along with the poor girl's reference to a speckled band, and her sister's speculation regarding a gypsie kerchief, put me upon an entirely wrong scent. Which shows, my dear Watson, how dangerous it is to reason from insufficient data.

WATSON: Yes, of course.

HOLMES: Once it was clear to me how no danger could threaten an occupant of that room from the window or the door, my attention was speedily drawn to the ventilator and the bell-pull. I first noted that the ventilator was between two bedrooms, which was odd, as most are set to pass fresh air from the outside. And once it was discovered that the bell-pull did not function as one would normally expect, I knew it had to serve some other purpose. But what? It was then the doctor's fondness for creatures from India came to mind.

WATSON: The adder? But how did you --

HOLMES: The doctor's journals on exotics of India, the milk, the leash, the second bell-pull, and you yourself suspected poison in the death of Julia Stoner.

WATSON: Which was dismissed in the coroner's inquiry.

HOLMES: As he could not see the facts as plainly as I.

(MORE)

19 CONTINUED:

19

HOLMES: A chair was placed under the ventilator in the doctor's room. The cushion showed wear as if someone had stood repeatedly upon it. Therefore, I surmised the doctor had stood upon the chair and sent a deadly snake through the ventilator.

WATSON: Remarkable.

HOLMES: Elementary. But more interesting was the fact that while the doctor could surely place the serpent into the room, it might or might not bite the occupant of the bed. That made for a risk that the creature would be revealed in the morning light. It was for this reason the snake was trained.

WATSON: Trained? Ah, the whistle!

HOLMES: Excellent, Watson! We heard the whistle soft and low, which I suspect was to compel the snake to crawl down the bell pull. As morning approached, I expect the whistle would summon the snake up the rope and back to the ventilator where it would be rewarded with milk in a saucer.

WATSON: And during the day, Roylott kept the snake hidden in his safe.

HOLMES: Yes. You see, the poor woman might escape every night for a week, perhaps more, but sooner or later, the snake would claim its victim.

WATSON: Only the sharpest-eyed coroner could locate two small puncture marks where such an exotic posion was introduced.

HOLMES: Precisely. With Miss Stoner claiming she had heard the same whistle that marked the tragic death of her sister, I knew what to listen for last night.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

HOLMES: When I heard the whistle I came on guard, but I could see nothing, and with such a deadly presence lurking close by I could not act hastily. When next I heard the snake hiss just above my head, I struck the light and lashed out with my cane.

WATSON: And all the unexpected commotion coming from the room caused the doctor to whistle for the snake.

HOLMES: Perhaps the doctor was trying to recall the snake, that I do not know. But my attack roused the creature's temper, and once back through the ventilator, it flew upon the first person it saw.

WATSON: A terrible business. All for greed.

HOLMES: Indeed. Yesterday, when I reviewed the will of Miss Stoner's mother filed in London, her estate was valued at a goodly sum. The will also stipulated that upon their marriage, each of her daughters was to receive half the estate. Apparently Roylott was unwilling to part with the money. It has been proven that the last of the Stoke Moran heirs would rather kill his stepdaughters than risk a further decline in his living standard.

WATSON: A doctor? It's ... unimaginable.

HOLMES: When a doctor does go wrong he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge. (pause) I am no doubt indirectly responsible for Dr. Grimesby Roylott's death, Watson, but I cannot say that it will weigh very heavily upon my conscience.

SFX: MUSIC UP

END