

# THE BOY WHO LOST HIS FOOT

A Story of  
Herlock Sholmes, Detective,  
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By PETER TODD  
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I was about to sit down to my lunch when the telephone bell rang in our consulting room in Shaker Street. Mrs. Spudson, our housekeeper, had already placed the goodly viands on the table, and Sholmes, having seated himself, was about to attack the sausages which were steaming before him.

He glanced at me as the bell tinkled forth.

"Answer the 'phone, Jotson," he said, politely, his mouth full of sausage.

"It is probably a wrong number, Sholmes," I pleaded, with a wistful eye on my lunch.

"No, Jotson, it is not a wrong number. It is a caller - possibly someone to report the death of one of your patients, or, more likely, someone needing my professional assistance."

I looked at him in surprise.

"My dear Sholmes," I murmured. "How can you possibly know that it is not a wrong number?"

He yawned, and shook a piece of sausage at me.

"To a trained mind, the matter is simple. We get three wrong numbers for every genuine call. This is the fourth time the bell has rung this morning. The other three were wrong numbers. Ergo! This is a genuine call. Answer the 'phone, Jotson."

For a moment I was speechless at my amazing friend's startling deduction. Then I grabbed the receiver and listened.

"Is that Mr. Herlock Sholmes?" came a youthful voice.

"This is Mr. Sholmes's residence. Dr. Jotson speaking."

The unknown interlocutor spoke again quickly. He seemed to be considerably perturbed.

"My name is Merry. I am speaking from St. Jim's School near Rylcombe. I need Mr. Sholmes' aid at once."

"Quite so," I replied, soothingly. "And what is the trouble, my dear sir?"

"I've lost my foot," came the surprising answer.

I almost dropped the telephone in my astonishment.

I stammered: "You've lost what?"

The fellow at the other end answered me with impatience.

"I've lost my foot."

I said, with some dignity: "My dear sir, I imagine that it must be my services which you require - not that of Mr. Sholmes. I am a doctor, and if you have lost your nether member...."

"Don't be an ass," hooted the strange Mr. Merry, from the other end of the line. "I've lost my foot, and I want Mr. Herlock Sholmes to find it."

"You want Herlock Sholmes to find your foot?" I almost babbled.

"Yes, yes." Mr. Merry sounded eager. "We are in the middle of a cricket match, and I can't play cricket without my foot."

"I should think it would be difficult," I agreed. I began to think that I was dealing with a lunatic.

"Tell Mr. Sholmes that I shall expect him in an hour on the St. Jim's playing fields near Rylcombe. It's a matter of life and death," came the voice of the footless gentleman. There was a whirr on the line. He had rung off.

I replaced the receiver, and turned to find Sholmes regarding me with a quizzical expression upon his finely chiselled face.

"A Mr. Merry of St. Jim's School near Rylcombe has lost his foot, and wants you to find it. He says it's a matter of life and death," I blurted out.

Sholmes pursed his sensitive lips, but did not speak.

I continued: Surely, Sholmes, you will not waste your time on so preposterous a matter. If the young man has actually lost a foot, there can be no object in your searching for it."

Sholmes smiled, and lit his two pipes.

"On the contrary, Jotson." He blew out a dense cloud of smoke. "My mother once lost her head at a political meeting, but she found it afterwards. This case interests me. Nous verrons! We will make our way to St. James' College near Rylcombe."

"Very well, Sholmes." I was slightly offended, and added, with dignity; "But first I will have my lunch."

Sholmes picked up his hat and placed it on his head.

He said, blandly: "I have eaten your lunch as well as my own. As it consisted of Mrs. Spudson's sausages, you should be grateful. Come, my good fellow."

We arrived at Victoria Station and took second-class tickets for Wayland Junction. During our journey in a first-class compartment, Sholmes looked unusually thoughtful. I could see that he was deeply intrigued by the strange mystery of the young man who had lost his foot.

At Wayland we took a taxi, and in a very short time we found ourselves walking across the playing fields of St. Jim's School. A cricket match was in progress, and a number of white-clad figures were standing by the pavilion. A handsome, sun-tanned youth, with bright, sparkling eyes, ran up to us. He wore flannels and the red and white blazer of St. Jim's.

He said, breathlessly: "Mr. Sholmes, thank goodness you have come. I am Tom Merry."

Sholmes passed a hand over his aquiline nose.

He observed: "Dr. Jotson and I are honoured to make your acquaintance, Mr. Merry, but I am surprised. I understood that you had lost a pedal extremity."

Tom Merry threw an anxious glance in the direction of the cricket match.

He said, a despairing note of appeal in his voice: "I've lost my foot, Mr. Sholmes. I shall get a duck without my good old foot. The New House is playing the School House. The New House have made 210. Figgins got a century, and Redfern bagged 38, while Koumi Rao hit up a score. Unless I can make a century, we are lost. Cardew and Gussy are stonewalling to keep the game alive, but I shall make a duck without my foot."

I could see that Sholmes was arriving, as I had done, at the conclusion that Tom Merry was a lunatic.

He said, brusquely: "My dear Mr. Merry, you appear to have your normal share of two feet. Do you mean to say that you were originally blessed with a third understanding, which you have mislaid?"

Tom Merry made a weary gesture of impatience.

"My rabbit's foot, Mr. Sholmes," he explained. "It's my luck. Without my rabbit's foot, I am undone."

"Ah!" Sholmes saw light. "You have mislaid a rabbit's foot which is your lucky charm. How did you come to lose it? You may speak quite freely before Dr. Jotson."

Tom Merry raised both his hands in impotent despair.

"I went into the pavvy to wash my hands, after having shaken the paw of a New House man. My foot was then in my blazer pocket. I hung the blazer on a peg, and washed. I put my blazer on, and, when I felt in my pocket, the foot was gone." Tom Merry's voice broke. "Mr. Sholmes, find my foot, and all that I have is yours."

"It would appear that Mr. Merry's foot has been stolen," I murmured in sympathy.

Sholmes gave me a severe glance.

"I never jump to conclusions, Jotson. Mr. Merry, is it possible that some New House boy may have removed your foot, in the knowledge that the loss would spoil your game?"

Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders.

"I hardly think so. The New House men don't wash much, but they are the soul of honour."

Sholmes ran his eye over the sturdy figure of the St. Jim's lad. Then he made one of those startling remarks which always fill me with such amazement.

He said: "In ten minutes, Mr. Merry, I will place your rabbit's foot in your hands."

"Sholmes!" I gasped, breathless with wonder.

Tom Merry's face lit up like the rising sun.

"Rejoin your friends, Mr. Merry," said Sholmes. "In ten minutes your foot will be with you."

With a brisk step, Tom Merry walked over to the other fellows who had been watching us. Sholmes's gaze followed the attractive young cricketer.

He said, thoughtfully: "Jotson, do you notice anything curious about that lad?"

"He is very polite, which is unusual to-day," I suggested.

Sholmes smiled bleakly.

He merely said: "Wait here!"

He left me, and entered the pavilion, the boys who were standing in the doorway moving to allow him to pass.

Ten minutes went by, during which time I watched the game. I saw an elegant cricketer who wore a monocle hit a brilliant four, only to be caught at point off the next ball. There was a roar of cheering round the ground, but a murmur of despondency among the boys near to me. Tom Merry approached me, a worried look on his face.

Just then, Herlock Sholmes emerged from the pavilion, and Tom Merry regarded him hopefully.

"I must go in to bat now, Mr. Sholmes. Have you had any luck?"

"Luck is a word which does not exist in my vocabulary," said the great detective with a frown. "By deduction, I have found your foot."

Tom Merry's face brightened, as my remarkable friend passed to him a furry little object which gave off a scent of decomposed meat.

"Where did you find it?" he demanded.

"In your pocket," was the astounding answer.

"In my pocket?" babbled Tom Merry.

"Sholmes, I am amazed," I said in wonder.

"As usual, Jotson... but the matter was simple. I asked you whether you observed anything curious about our cricketing friend. With your untrained intellect, you did not. But I noticed that the blazer he was wearing was extremely small for him. His sleeves only reached to his elbows, and the bottom of the jacket came only to the small of his back. Furthermore, when he removed it to prepare for his innings, I observed on the name tab, the words Walter A. D'Arcy. Your name is not, I think, Walter A. D'Arcy?"

"My name is Tom Merry."

"Just so!" Sholmes smiled, and took a sniff of cocaine from a silver box.

"You took off your own blazer when you washed, and inadvertently donned the jacket of Walter A. D'Arcy when you left the pavilion. I found a blazer - obviously your own, since it bore your name - hanging in the pavilion, and your foot was in the pocket. Voila! My account for services rendered will reach you in the course of a post. Don't thank me... if you double the amount of my charge, it will be ample recompense."

As we left the ground, I looked back. There was Tom Merry, glittering with the joy of youth, and batting like a trojan. I saw a ball from his bat lifted clean over the pavilion.

"Jotson," murmured Herlock Sholmes, wistfully, "I wish I were a boy again."

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

"THE BOY WHO LOST HIS FOOT" is loosely based on the Herlock Sholmes stories which Charles Hamilton wrote for the first GREYFRIARS HERALD, published as a separate entity, one halfpenny weekly, for eighteen weeks in 1917 - 1918. Very naughtily, Mr. Hamilton tilted at the famous stories of Conan Doyle.

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# THE ADVENTURES OF HERLOCK SHOLMES.

No. 1.  
THE ADVENTURE OF THE DIAMOND PINS.



Written by  
PETER TODD.

## CHAPTER ONE.

SHERLOCK was examining a pair of diamond pins under a powerful microscope, a reading lamp in the "Daily Mail" room. I came into our sitting-room at Baker Street. He looked round with a lazy smile. "I have surprised you, my dear Watson," he remarked. "You are always surprising me, Sholmes," I replied. "I tell you what you hope to discover by a microscopic examination of a daily paper?"

HERLOCK SHOLMES.

subject. "I see that you have not shaved this morning, Watson." "Sholmes, how could you possibly know?" "He laughed. "Is it not a fact?" he asked. "It is a fact, certainly. But how do you get--" "It was not a guess, Watson," Sholmes frowned a little. "I never guess. I have guesswork to do for the police. It was a simple deduction, Watson, simply explained. After shaving, your face presents a smooth and newly-shaven appearance. I have observed this on innumerable occasions."

"Tene. But--" "At the present moment, it presents a rough and hairy appearance. In a trained eye, my dear Watson, the conclusion is instant and obvious. You have not shaved."



"It is simple enough now that you explain it, Sholmes, but I confess it would not have occurred to me. Yet I have endeavored to study your methods."

"Rome was not built in a day, my dear fellow," said Sholmes, with a smile. "You must take time. It would amuse me to test your progress. Look at this, and tell me what you deduce from it."

He took a large pistol from a drawer, and handed it to me. "I

There was a desperate struggle. In the midst of it the door was flung open, and Inspector Powisse rushed into the room. (See Chapter 2.)

ALONZO, the Duffer so mild, who came at redeeming the ways that are wild. BUNTER, in need of a muscle, who said not to live, but lived just to guggle.

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