

## The Untold Tales - Analyzed

Every Sherlockian has wondered about the Untold Tales at some time or another. Watson mentions them in more than forty of the Canonical tales and readers remain fascinated by dreams of stories yet to be written. My own Sherlockian interest is in pastiches, parodies and related fiction, and part of the information I am attempting to collect about these supplements to the Canon is to identify efforts to tell the Untold Tales. Several lists of Untold Tales have been published, with varying numbers of entries included. Scholars have identified as many as 160 untold tales, although I feel many of these citations are questionable. Keeping this in mind, I decided to search the Canon and prepare a list that would specifically support my effort to categorize the pastiches I have found that tell these tales.

W. S. Baring-Gould's excellent **The Annotated Sherlock Holmes** has both served as a source for my researches and provided a sequence for listing the results. The sequence of events in the Canon is, of course, a matter of some contention, with no real agreement in sight. Baring-Gould's chronology provides a sound, working environment for listing the citations of the Untold Tales. In this article, I shall list my findings, discuss my selections and attempt to resolve some of the conflicts. As a part of this process, I am introducing a standard set of codes I shall use for all relevant tales in citations for my own database of pastiches, parodies and related fiction. I hope others may find it useful. This set of codes has to be unique across the Canon, the Apocrypha and the Untold Tales, and it will use the Christ codes for the Canonical tales as a starting place.

Criteria for including a citation in this list are simple. First, the event must be listed in the Canon or in the published apocrypha. Second, there must be some indication that the citation represents an actual event investigated or dealt with by Holmes and/or Watson. This proviso is important, as there are a fair number of citations in the Canon of events that obviously are not actual cases investigated by Holmes. In spite of this qualification, for my purposes, items must be included if pastiches, parodies or related fiction have been written about them. This consideration will add several otherwise unacceptable entries to the list

The Untold Tales that have been identified fall into five separate categories. The first category is obvious references to events involving Holmes. These form the bulk of the entries and are listed in the sequence the citations appear in Baring-Gould's book. This may not be a strict time sequence, but it is reasonably accurate and makes a convenient arrangement. Each Canonical tale is listed, along with its Christ Code. Untold Tale citations from that Canonical story are then listed along with a proposed abbreviation for each such tale.

### **The Gloria Scott (GLOR)**

#### **The Musgrave Ritual (MUSG)**

1. ... the Tarleton murders...(TARL).
2. ... the case of Vamberry, the wine merchant...(VAMB).
3. ... the adventure of the old Russian woman...(RUSS).
4. ... the singular affair of the aluminum crutch...(ALUM).
5. ... a full account of Ricoletti of the club foot and his abominable wife (RICO).

#### **A Study in Scarlet (STUD)**

6. ...Mr. Lestrade, who came three or four times in a single week (LEST).
7. One morning a young girl called, fashionably dressed...(FASH).
8. ... a gray-headed, seedy visitor, looking like a Jew pedlar...(PEDL).
9. ... a slipshod elderly woman (ELDE).
10. ... an old, white-haired gentleman had an interview...(GENT).
11. ... a railway porter in his velveteen uniform (RAIL).

#### **The Adventure of the Speckled Band (SPEC)**

12. ... Mrs. Farintosh...an opal Tiara (OPAL).

#### **The Resident Patient (RESI)**

13. “And the catalepsy!” ... “It is a very easy complaint to imitate. I have done it myself.”(CATA).

#### **The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor (NOBL)**

14. ...Lord Backwater tells me...(BACK).
15. ...the little problem of the Grosvenor Square furniture van (GROS).
16. ...letters... from a fishmonger...(FISH).
17. ...letters...a tide-waiter...(TIDE)..
18. My last client of the sort was a king. ... The King of Scandinavia (KING).

**The Adventure of the Second Stain (SECO)**

19. ...the woman at Margate... No powder on her nose...(MARG).

**The Reigate Squires (REIG)**

20. The whole question of the Netherland-Sumatra Company and of the colossal schemes of Baron Maupertuis... (NETH).

**A Scandal in Bohemia (SCAN)**

21. ...of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Trepoff murder...(TREP).  
 22. ...the singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee...(ATKI).  
 23. ...finally, the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning family of Holland (HOLL).  
 24. In the case of the Darlington substitution scandal, it was of use to me...(DARL).  
 25. ...and also in the Arnsworth castle business (ARNS).  
 26. Internal references indicate Watson wooed and wedded a wife before Mary Morstan (IMAR).  
 27. When Mrs. Turner (not Hudson) has brought in the tray...(TURN).

**The Man with the Twisted Lip (TWIS)**

28. ...the rascally Lascar who runs it has sworn vengeance upon me...(LASC).

**The Five Orange Pips (FIVE)**

29. ... the adventure of the Paradol Chamber...(PARA).  
 30. ... the Amateur Mendicant Society, who held a luxurious club in the lower vault of a furniture warehouse...(AMAT).  
 31. ... the facts connected with the disappearance of the British barque Sophy Anderson... (SOPH).  
 32. ... the singular adventures of the Grice Patersons in the island of Uffa... (GRIC).  
 33. ... and, finally, the Camberwell poisoning case (CAMB).  
 34. I heard from Major Prendergast how you saved him in the Tankerville Club scandal (TANK).  
 35-37. I have been beaten four times – three times by men and once by a woman (BTN1, BTN2, BTN3, SCAN[?]).

**A Case of Identity (IDEN)**

38. This is the Dundas separation case...(DUND).  
 see #23 ... it (the ring) was from the reigning family of Holland... (HOLL).  
 39. ... save for one rather intricate matter which has been referred to me from Marseilles... (MARS).  
 40. ...from Mrs. Etherege, whose husband you found so easy when ... had given him up for dead (ETHE).

**The Red-Headed League (REDH)**

41. We (John Clay and I) have had some skirmishes but we had never set eyes on each other before (CLAY).

**The Adventure of the Dying Detective (DYIN)****The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle (BLUE)****The Valley of Fear (VALL)**

- 42/43. ...Inspector MacDonald... Twice already had Holmes helped him... (MAC1, MAC2).

**The Yellow Face (YELL)****The Greek Interpreter (GREE)**

44. ...I expected to see you round last week to consult me over that Manor House case (MANO).

**The Sign of [the?] Four (SIGN)**

45. I was consulted last week by Francois le Villard... (VILL).  
 46. ...the most winning woman I ever knew was hanged for poisoning three little children... (WINN).  
 47. ...the most repellent man of my acquaintance is a philanthropist... (REPE).  
 48. ...you once enabled my employer, Mrs. Cecil Forrester, to unravel a little domestic complication (FORR).  
 49. ...you lectured us all on causes and inferences and effects in the Bishopgate jewel case (BISH).

**The Hound of the Baskervilles (HOUN)**

50. ...I was exceedingly preoccupied by that little affair of the Vatican cameos...(VATI).  
 51. Ah, Wilson, I see you have not forgotten the little case in which I had the good fortune to help you (MESS).  
 52. At the present instant, one of the most revered names in England is being besmirched by a blackmailer, and only I can stop a disastrous scandal (BLAM).

53. ...he had exposed the atrocious conduct of Colonel Upwood in connection with the famous card scandal at the Nonpareil Club... (NONP).
54. ...he had defended the unfortunate Mme Montpensier from the charge of murder that hung over her in connection with the death of her stepdaughter... (MMEN).

**The Adventure of the Copper Beeches (COPP)**

**The Boscombe Valley Mystery (BOSC)**

**The Stockbroker's Clerk (STOC)**

**The Naval Treaty (NAVA)**

55. The (second?) Adventure of the Second Stain,... [NOTE! details differ from Canonical SECO] (SEC2).
56. ...the Adventure of the Tired Captain (TIRE).
57. If it [this paper] turns red, it means a man's life. ...a very commonplace little murder (INDI).

**The Cardboard Box (CARD)**

58. ... something like Aldridge, who helped us in the bogus laundry affair (BOGU).

**The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb (ENGR)**

59. ...and that of Colonel Warburton's madness (WARB).

**The Crooked Man (CROO)**

**The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge (WIST)**

60. ...you know how bored I have been since we locked up Colonel Carruthers (CARR).

**Silver Blaze (SILV)**

**The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet (BERY)**

**The Final Problem (FINA)**

61. ...I saw in the papers that he had been engaged by the French Government upon a matter of supreme importance... (FREN).
62. ... recent cases in which I have been of assistance to the Royal Family of Scandinavia...(ROYA).

**The Adventure of the Empty House (EMPT)**

63. I traveled for two years in Tibet, therefore, and amused myself by visiting Lhasa... a Norwegian named Sigerson... (TIBE).
64. I then passed through Persia... (PERS).
65. ...looked in at Mecca... (MECC).
66. ...and paid a short but interesting visit to the Khalifa at Khartoum... (KHAL).
67. Returning to France, I spent some months...in a laboratory at Montpellier... (MONT).
68. ... and Mathews, who knocked out my left canine in the waiting room at Charing Cross... (MATH).
69. ...of the death of Mrs. Stewart, of Lauder, in 1887 (STEW).

**The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez (GOLD)**

70. ...I see my notes on the repulsive story of the red leech...(REDL).

The punctuation does not make it clear whether “the red leech” and “Crosby the banker” are the same or are different cases, so I shall treat them as separate in case they are. There are also pastiches that cite one or the other but not both.

71. ...and the terrible death of Crosby, the banker...(CROS).
72. Here also I find an account of the Addleton tragedy (ADDL)...
73. ...and the singular contents of the ancient British barrow (BARR) [clearly a single event, however, there are separate pastiches].
74. The famous Smith-Mortimer succession case... (SMIT).
75. ...the tracking and arrest of Huret, the boulevard assassin... (BOUL).

**The Adventure of the Three Students (3STU)**

76. ...Holmes was pursuing some laborious researches in Early English charters... (CHAR).

**The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist (SOLI)**

77. ...the peculiar persecution to which John Vincent Harden, the well-known tobacco millionaire, had been subjected (HARD).  
78. ...it was near there (Farnham) that we took Archie Stamford, the forger (STAM).

**The Adventure of Black Peter (BLAC)**

79. ...his famous investigation of the sudden death of Cardinal Tosca... (TOSC).  
80. ...down to his arrest of Wilson, the notorious canary-trainer... (WILS).

**The Adventure of the Norwood Builder (NORW)**

81. ...the case of the papers of ex-President Murillo... (MURI).  
82. ...the shocking affair of the Dutch steamship, Friesland, which so nearly cost us both our lives (FRIE).  
83. ...that terrible murderer, Bert Stevens, who wanted us to get him off in '87 (STEV).

**The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans (BRUC)**

84. Suppose that I were Brooks... (BROO).  
85. ...or Woodhouse, or any of the fifty men who have good reason for taking my life...(WOOD).

**The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger (VEIL)**

86. ...the whole story concerning the politician, the lighthouse and the trained cormorant... (POLI).

**The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire (SUSS)**

87. Matilda Briggs was...a ship which is associated with the giant rat of Sumatra... (GRAT).  
88. Victor Lynch, the forger (LYNC).  
89. Venomous lizard, or Gila. Remarkable case that (GILA)!

**The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter (MISS)**

90. ... and there was Henry Staunton, whom I helped to hang (STAU).

**The Adventure of the Abbey Grange (ABBE)**

- 91 - 94. Hopkins has called me in seven times, and on each occasion his summons has been entirely justified... [GOLD, BLAC and MISS are three. What are the other four?] (HOP1, HOP2, HOP3, HOP4).

**The Adventure of the Devil's Foot (DEVI)**

95. ...Dr. Moore Agar, of Harley Street, whose dramatic introduction to Holmes... (AGAR).

**The Adventure of the Dancing Men (DANC)****The Adventure of the Retired Colourman (RETI)**

96. ...I am preoccupied with this case of the two Coptic Patriarchs... (2COP).

**The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton (CHAS)****The Adventure of the Six Napoleons (SIXN)**

97. ...how the dreadful business of the Abernety family was first brought to my notice... (ABEN).  
98. ...and get out the papers of the Conk-Singleton forgery case (CONK).

**The Problem of Thor Bridge (THOR)**

99. ...is that of Mr. James Phillimore who, stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world (PHIL).  
100. ...is that of the cutter Alicia, which sailed one spring morning into a patch of mist from where she never emerged... (ALIC).  
101. ...is that of Isadora Persano, the well-known journalist and duelist... (ISAD).

**The Adventure of the Priory School (PRIO)**

102. I am retained in the case of the Ferrers documents... (FERR).  
103. ...and the Abergavenny murder is coming up to trial (ABEG).

**The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place (SHOS)**

104. Since I ran down that coiner by the zinc and copper filings in the seam of his cuff... (COIN).

**The Adventure of the Three Garridebs (3GAR)**

105. ...it was in the same month that Holmes refused a knighthood for services which may, someday, be described (SERV).

**The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax (LADY)**

106. ...I cannot possibly leave London while old Abrahams is in such mortal terror of his life (ABRA).

**The Adventure of the Illustrious Client (ILLU)****The Adventure of the Red Circle (REDC)**

107. You arranged an affair for a lodger of mine last year ... Mr. Fairdale Hobbs (HOBB).

**The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier (BLAN)**

108. I also had a commission from the Sultan of Turkey which required immediate action... (SULT).

109. I was once able to do him a professional service... His name is Sir James Saunders (SIRJ).

**The Adventure of the Three Gables (3GAB)**

110. I believe that my late husband, Mortimer Maberly, was one of your early clients (MABE).

**The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone (MAZA)**

111. Old Baron Dowson said the night before he was hanged that in my case what the law had gained the stage had lost (DOWS).

**The Adventure of the Creeping Man (CREE)****The Adventure of the Lion's Mane (LION)****His last Bow (LAST)**

112. ...I started my pilgrimage at Chicago... (CHIC).

113. ...graduated in an Irish secret society at Buffalo... (IRIS).

114. ...gave serious trouble to the constabulary at Skibbareen... (SKIB).

115. It was I also who saved from murder ... Count Von und Zu Grafenstein... (GRAF).

The second category of items that are often included in lists of Untold Tales is that of events or persons cited from Holmes's commonplace books or other reference works. These almost surely do not represent case references, but are clearly items from Holmes's files and not from his personal experience. The following are included only because pastiches have been written or suggested about them:

**The Adventure of the Empty House (EMPT)**

116. ...Morgan the poisoner... (MORG).

117. ...Merridew of abominable memory... (MERR).

**The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire (SUSS)**

118. Vittoria the circus belle (VITT).

119. Vanderbilt and the Yeggman (VAND).

120. Vigor, the Hammersmith wonder (VIGO).

**The Adventure of the Illustrious Client (ILLU)**

121. My old friend (not likely met) Charlie Peace was a violin virtuoso (hanged 02/25/1879) (PEAC).

122. Wainwright (Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, another real-life criminal) was no mean artist (WAIN).

**The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter (MISS)**

123. There is Arthur H. Staunton, the rising young forger... (FORG).

A third category of Untold Tales is that of citations in the Canon of cases explicitly attributed to other investigators. Several of these are included because Sherlockian pastiches have been written about them.

**The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place (SHOS)**

124. ... in the St. Pancras case, you may remember that a cap was found beside the dead policeman... ["Is this your case? No, my friend, Merivale of the Yard, asked me to look into the case"(consultation)] (PANC).

**The Adventure of the Illustrious Client (ILLU)**

125. ... his (Col. Sir James Damery) negotiations ... over the Hammerford will case... (HAMM).

**The Adventure of the Red Circle (REDC)**

126. The hero of the Long Island cave mystery [Mr. Leverton of Pinkerton's] (LONG).

The fourth class of questionable “Untold Tales” is alternative entries for various otherwise identified tales. Examples of these are “The Matilda Briggs” and “The Giant Rat of Sumatra” along with “The Odessa Murder Case” and “The Trepoff Murder”. There are several duplications, but none of these tales should be included more than once. The only exceptions, as noted above, are “the red leech” and “Crosby the banker”.

The final class of citations is that of alternative names, used in the Canon, for Canonical tales. There are quite a number of tales in this class. Just a few examples are “The Abbas Parva Tragedy” which is actually the case in **The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger**, just as “The Tragedy of Woodman's Lee” and “The Strange Death of Peter Carey” are both alternate names for **The Adventure of Black Peter**. Similarly, both “The Black Pearl of the Borgias” and “The Episode of Yoxley Old Place” refer, respectively, to **SIXN** and **GOLD**. Again, none of these can legitimately claim to be Untold Tales as they have been told already in the Canon.

To complete a list of story codes, I have selected values for the Apocrypha, other tales by Doyle (and others) that agree with the Sherlockian “Universe”. For a choice of Apocrypha, I have used Jack Tracy’s excellent “**Sherlock Holmes: the Published Apocrypha**”. Each item has sound linkages to the Canon and reason to be considered “close” to Canonical for discussion purposes. These are all reasonable choices, if not definitive.

#### **The Field Bazaar (FIEL)**

#### **How Watson Learned the Trick (WATS)**

Another Untold Tale I have identified comes from one of the Apocrypha. The tale was a present to Doyle from Barrie on the occasion of the opening of a play they had jointly authored. Doyle accepted and spoke well of it.

#### **The Adventure of the Two Collaborators [by J. M. Barrie] (2COL)**

127. This pastiche lists *The Adventure of the Man with the Cork Leg* as a Holmes case (CORK).

#### **The Man with the Watches (MANW)**

#### **The Lost Special (LOST)**

#### **Sherlock Holmes: a Drama in Four Acts (SH4A)**

#### **The Painful Predicament of Sherlock Holmes (PAIN)**

#### **The Speckled Band [Play script] (SPEP)**

#### **The Crown Diamond (CROW)**

#### **The Case of the Man Who Was Wanted (WANT)**

128. The final Untold Tale is mentioned nowhere in the Canon or the Apocrypha. This is even more surprising since this is actually the single most popular of all pastiche subjects. I code it as (JACK), for “Saucy Jack.”