



To the Victors

A ghostly whodunit wherein Holmes & Watson retrieve Nazi swag

When we set up housekeeping in our little duplex crypt we agreed that a mail box was unessential. After all, alive or immortal, who needs junk mail? And then, one fine day, an envelope poked in under our threshold door.

It was addressed to “residents” at an address that only a few may recognize as the successor to our previous digs. The letter, I must admit, baffled me. It resembled a formal *bordereau* of some quality, and I quickly handed it to Holmes. His generally somnolent eyes widened sharply at the return address.

It read Number 10 Downing Street, London, U.K.

“Well?” his fingers fluttered, “Open it, open it.”

I must have hesitated, and he grunted, “Never mind. Give it here.”

In one motion he’d slit it and unfurled its contents, a single note that he avidly scanned, then thoughtfully pondered.

It was my turn to be anxious, “Well?”

Deep in thought, he passed it to me. The letterhead read “Office of the Honorable Prime Minister.”

Scrawled on it in a broad swooping hand was this message:

“My illustrious Holmes and Watson,

Time cannot wither nor custom stale my gratitude

for the inestimable service you have rendered the Crown and Kingdom. In that spirit I am pleased to tender this invitation to join me here on Sunday in an evening of pleasantries. See you at 8.

Yours, Winnie”

“Humph,” said Holmes. “Either he’s gone bonkers. Or he’s swilled a snootful ...”

“And I haven’t a thing to wear,” I jibbered to myself.

“Tut, tut, ghosts never do. We’re obliged to come as we are, much like his Lordship, who passed away decades ago.”

“Eh. How democratic of him.”

At dusk we strolled past Buckingham and St. James Park to Trafalgar Square and the seat of government, Whitehall ... to dark little Downing Street. No need to knock at No. 10. We simply oozed through the barred door, and followed Winnie’s bombastic voice and rude cigar smoke trail. It led us to the leisure area below stairs, about three levels below. Once known as the War Room, and even earlier the furnace room, it now served as Winnie’s art studio.

Here two bulldog visages were going at it tooth and nail. Sir Winston was slapping a crude vertical slash of sea-green paint on his easel and spewing invective.

“Our English Channel did it, dear boy. Without it, your D-Day might have become X, Y or Zero-Day!”

The other artist angrily stippled his own canvas. “Baloney! Our aircraft and paratroops peppered the Jerries, paving the way for a successful invasion ...” This chap resembled Eisenhower, and so he was! Only the commander of allied forces in the ETO would dare oppose Churchill’s blistering saliva.

Then, sensing our presence, they froze, and turned on the charm. Winnie cheerily welcomed us, extending a plump hand.

“Ah, dear gentlemen. How good of you to stop by. We’d like to thank you.”

“Why whatever for?” asked Holmes.

His Lordship turned to the General. “Listen to the man. What true British modesty. Here are the discoverers of the buried Nazi art trea-



King's Curse

Wherein Holmes & Watson investigate the Tower of London

“At last,” I remarked to Holmes, “A day so fair it hardly seems Alike England. What a splendid brisk morning, and what perfect walking weather.”

“A capital day, Watson,” he attested. “Makes one feel almost human.”

Which was decidedly the case with us. It had been a century since that Doyle fellow had retired us to our damp duplex among Camden church yard's granite crypts. Yet it seemed that irksome crimes still haunted us. Holmes' solution was to make sure we were up and out and about early each day.

A bracing stroll led us this day to Trinity Square, a small park near the Thames in southeast London. We soon found a park bench devoid of bird droppings and rested awhile, two gentlemen wraiths gazing at England's most enduring relic.

Was it the sluggish Thames? Or the soaring Tower Bridge astride the river? Not quite. In point of fact, we beheld the most fearsome bastion in all English history, the ancient Tower of London.

How ironic, I mused, that this historic edifice had withstood ten centuries of invasion by millions of tourists, and yet not once in all of our peregrinations had we inspected its turrets and dungeons.

Holmes seemed intrigued by our little park. An old duffer came along leaning on his white cane. He first came to our bench, then paused. Sniffing Holmes' redolent tobacco scent, he went to the next bench. He