

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE REMAINING IMPROBABLE

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EXCERPT

Holmes speaks, Watson answers:

“It’s clear, Watson, that you have come to trust this man, never mind your fancy knot work.” He let a hand rest briefly on Joubert’s shoulder, and then snatched it away. “The charade you two gentleman have just now performed causes me to question myself. You are evidently in collusion.”

I said, “We were that obvious?”

“I’m afraid so,” Holmes said. “In fact, when I have time, I will publish a monograph on what I will call ‘body language.’ Today’s performance will serve as a prime example. I watched you usher this Frenchman across the cottage—your hesitation, your caution lest you cause him the least pain, was evident. Your care was exactly as you would grant a lifelong patient going through a complicated procedure. You watched his every backward step, lest he trip. I noted the commiserating tilt of your head—and the lines of concern on your brow. Without a single word, you managed to signal your sympathy. To sum up, between the gun and the man you pointed it at, I detected at least a hundred yards worth of high-grade Watsonian scruple.

Holmes glared down at the top of Joubert’s head. “No doubt the entire Punch and Judy was your conception, Pierre, but you could not hide your concern for Watson, how you sought to assure him that it was all for a worthy purpose. Indeed, I saw you shudder and sweat, but you were in no fear for your life—in no dread of John Watson, at least. I submit to you both, that what I have witnessed just now was more a dance than an arrest.”