



**SHERLOCK HOLMES
AND THE ADVENTURE
OF THE SUICIDE CLUB**

BY JEFFREY HATCHER



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

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The World Premiere of
SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE ADVENTURE OF THE SUICIDE CLUB
was originally commissioned and produced by
Arizona Theatre Company, Tuscon/Phoenix, Arizona
(David Ira Goldstein, Artistic Director; Jessica L. Andrews, Interim Managing Director).

For Julian Bailey (1951–2011)

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE ADVENTURE OF THE SUICIDE CLUB received its world premiere at the Arizona Theatre Company (David Ira Goldstein, Artistic Director; Jessica L. Andrews, Interim Managing Director) in Tucson, Arizona on September 17, 2011. It was directed by David Ira Goldstein; the set design was by John Ezell; the costume design was by Mathew J. Lefebvre; the lighting design was by Don Darnutzer; the sound design was by Brian Jerome Peterson; and the projection design was by Jeffrey Cady. The cast was as follows:

SHERLOCK HOLMES Remi Sandri
DR. JOHN H. WATSON Jeff Steitzer
PRINCE NIKITA STARLOFF Nicholas Bailey
CHRISTIANE DE LABEGASSIER Alexandra Tavares
CLUB SECRETARY Celesta Ciulla
MR. WILLIAMS, MR. ROUNDY Mark Anders
MR. RICHARDS, MYCROFT HOLMES David Green
MR. GEORGE, INSPECTOR MICKLEWHITE . . James Cada
MR. HENRY, A.C. CROSSE Roberto Guajardo
MRS. HUDSON, LUCY O'MALLEY Maedell Dixon

Roles subsequently cut from the script were performed by: Chrissy Tolley, Karl Hussey, and Connor Kesserling

CHARACTERS

SHERLOCK HOLMES

DR. JOHN H. WATSON

PRINCE NIKITA STARLOFF

CHRISTIANE DE LABEGASSIER

CLUB SECRETARY

MR. WILLIAMS

MR. RICHARDS

MR. GEORGE

MR. HENRY

MR. ROUNDY

MYCROFT HOLMES

INSPECTOR MICKLEWHITE

A.C. CROSSE

MRS. HUDSON

LUCY O'MALLEY

OLDER LADY

MAGICIAN'S ASSISTANT

DOUBLING: The play is performed by a cast of 10 actors. The following roles can be doubled effectively, but other doubling schemes may work just as well or better:

Christiane/Magician's Assistant

Mrs. Hudson/Lucy O'Malley/Older Woman

Mr. Williams/Mr. Roundy

Mr. Richards/Mycroft Holmes

Mr. George/Inspector Micklewhite

Mr. Henry/A.C. Crosse

TIME

1914.

PLACE

London.

STAGE DESIGN

The play is written for maximum speed of transition, which the design must facilitate, so please avoid a cumbersome “realism” à la William Gillette. Scenes should be set against sleek, simple backdrops; scrims and/or screens that display information in the style of the chapter headings and illustrations found in the pages of *Beeton's*, *Lippincott's* and *The Strand*.

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE ADVENTURE OF THE SUICIDE CLUB

ACT ONE

Scene 1

221 B Baker Street

Projection: A Sidney Paget illustration of Sherlock Holmes on his chaise.

Dr. John H. Watson is discovered down center, facing us.

WATSON. “It was with the most severe concern that I did respond to a disturbing letter sent to me on the sixth of May 1914 by my former landlady Mrs. Hudson regarding my friend Sherlock Holmes. When I arrived at our old lodgings at 221 B Baker Street I found Holmes in a state that can only be described as despondent.” (*Lights reveal Sherlock Holmes, in his dressing gown, sprawled on a chaise in his Baker Street rooms.*)

HOLMES. I am despondent, Watson.

WATSON. “His very words.”

HOLMES. Despondent, despairing, devoid of ambition, expectation, hope, joy ... (*Watson glances behind the chaise.*) If you're looking for the needle, don't bother. I am not at the mercy of the seven-percent solution, if that's what you imagine is the cause of my malaise.

WATSON. Then what? Did a case go wrong? You brought the

Bournemouth Strangler to justice not two months past.

HOLMES. Yes, he hangs day after tomorrow.

WATSON. Well, then, all you need is another strangler or poisoner to come along. You know what you say, "Give me problems, give me work, / give me —"

HOLMES. "— / give me the most abstruse cryptogram, the most intricate analysis, and I am in my proper atmosphere." Yes, I recall you put that down for dubious posterity. (*Stands, pacing aimlessly.*) It isn't that I lack for work. I've been presented with any number of cases not worth rising from my stupor. I don't crave travel; I've been everywhere in the world. And I assure you I do not need a new flat-mate. Living with other people is hell.

WATSON. Holmes, have you bathed recently?

HOLMES. The body is designed for decay, Watson, there is no reason to hinder the natural process.

WATSON. No reason to hasten it either. Here, I have an idea! Look at me. Survey my clothes, my boots, my fingernails. Where have I been today?

HOLMES. (*Groans.*) Watson —

WATSON. Come, you do it all the time. When we met, the very first thing you said to me was...?

HOLMES. (*Dull, flat.*) "You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive."

WATSON. And how'd you know I'd been in Afghanistan? You said I appeared to be a medical type but with a military air. Ergo? Ergo an army doctor. My face was dark but my wrists were fair. Ergo? Ergo I'd been in the tropics. Arm held stiff, indicative of a wound, so where in the tropics could an English army doctor have gotten his arm wounded?

HOLMES. Wales.

WATSON. Holmes, really!

HOLMES. (*Sighs.*) All right. You came here from your tailor, you're due at the hospital, you forgot your watch, and you're late for an appointment.

WATSON. Recalled to life! And how did you know all this?

HOLMES. Because when you got here you said, "I've come from my tailor, I'm due at the hospital, I forgot my watch, and I'm late for an appointment."

WATSON. Oh, yes. Forgot. Holmes, do you know what my diagnosis is? You're suffering from the modern age. The 20th century, and all its attendant anxieties. Pick up a newspaper, from Morocco

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE ADVENTURE OF THE SUICIDE CLUB

by Jeffrey Hatcher

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"A darkly comic new take on the archetypal detective."

—The Arizona Republic

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