



An Inquiry into:  
*“The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone”*

“The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone” was first published in *The Strand Magazine*, on October 1921. It is part of *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*.

There is no full agreement among our chronologists as to when this story took place. The table below lists their

varied estimates.

If we go by the date arrived at by the majority, 1903, then at the time Sherlock Holmes would have been 49 years old and Doctor John H. Watson 51.

**Main Characters:**

Count Negretto Sylvius, an evil half-Italian nobleman turned criminal mastermind. Sam Merton, a punch-drunk boxer who serves as the count’s muscle. Billy, one of several of Holmes’ young but very wise and tactful page boys. Lord Cantlemere, one of the Master Sleuth’s three eminent employers in this case.

**Notable Quotes:**

“Mr. Holmes always knows whatever there is to know.”

“Why, surely, as a doctor, my dear Watson, you must admit that what your digestion gains in the way of blood supply is so much lost to the brain. I am a brain, Watson. The rest of me is a mere appendix. Therefore, it is the brain I must consider.”

“Your morals don’t improve, Watson. You have added fibbing to your other vices.”

“We are greatly your debtors, Mr. Holmes. Your sense of humour may, as you admit, be somewhat perverted, and its exhibition remarkably untimely, but at least I withdraw any reflection I have made upon your amazing professional powers.”

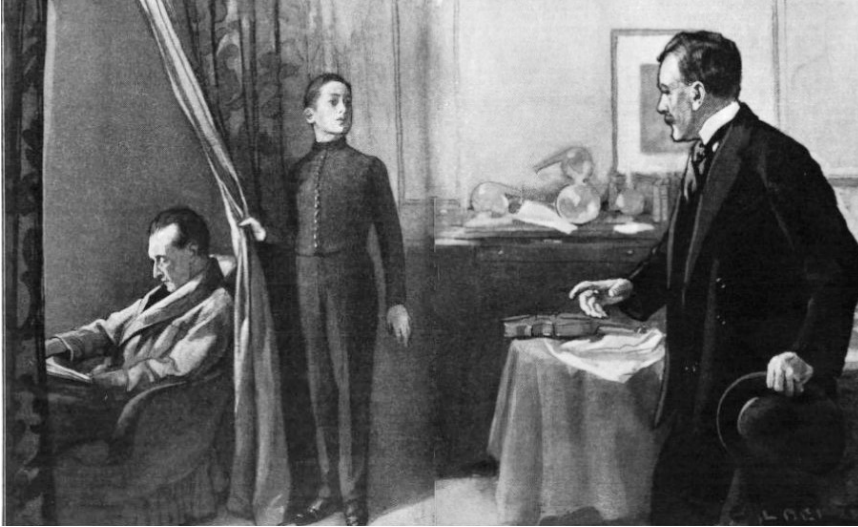
<i>The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone</i>	
<i>Chronologist</i>	<i>Date of the Adventure</i>
<i>Canon</i>	<i>Summer</i>
<i>Baring-Gould</i>	<i>Summer 1903</i>
<i>Bell</i>	<i>Summer 1903</i>
<i>Blakeney</i>	<i>1903</i>
<i>Brend</i>	<i>Summer 1903</i>
<i>Christ</i>	<i>Summer 1904</i>
<i>Dakin</i>	<i>Summer 1903</i>
<i>Folsom</i>	<i>Summer 1903</i>
<i>Hall</i>	<i>Summer 1903</i>
<i>Keefauver</i>	<i>Friday, June 1, 1894</i>
<i>Klinger</i>	<i>1903</i>
<i>Zeisler</i>	<i>Summer 1903</i>

Please note that Canon chronologists may differ on pivotal dates and comparative periods between cases, thus a simple majority is not necessarily correct. Most Canon scholars settle on a single chronologist’s results for their research framework.

## *Very Likely Apocryphal*

It seems very strange, but there are some serious Canonical scholars who consider this the best entry of the Sacred Writings. I must regretfully and respectfully disagree.

To my mind, there can be little doubt that this case was *not* written by Watson, or even the Literary Agent; and it is not just because it was written in the third person.



While it is true that, back in 1903, recycling was almost unheard of, whoever authored this case must have been a strong believer in this practice. Consider: there is a convenient wax image of Holmes that is used to fool the malefactors; there is more than one reference to air guns; the investigation centers around a stolen jewel of great value; there is a tense little conversation between the detective and the thief, reminiscent of Moriarty's visit to 221B; and Holmes' nemesis is a man

renowned as a big-game hunter. Shades of FINA, BLUE, and EMPT!

We also encounter a strangely two-dimensional Watson, who very uncharacteristically acts surprised over the fact that Holmes—the leading investigator of his time—has been engaged by the government to recover the stolen gem. Who else? Then, his sole purpose appears to be to rush away to call the police. Holmes, who rarely hesitated to ask his friend to engage with him in dangerous adventures, instead sends him on an errand better suited to Billy the page.

There is also the puzzling aspect of Count Silvus himself. Here is a criminal who must have been quite outstanding in his profession, for Sherlock Holmes to have troubled to keep such careful track of him, yet the Great Detective permitted him to operate without any attempt to curb his felonious career. It just seems peculiar that he did not bother to bring him to justice until then.

Then, as the saying goes, the icing on the cake is what seems to be a peculiarly restructured 221B. Did Mrs. Hudson decide to renovate to such an extent? Possibly here is where the “princely sums” paid her by Holmes came in.

The Great Detective himself appears to be somewhat changed. The light theatrical touch that he exhibited when he returned the missing naval treaty to Percy Phelps by placing it under the breakfast plate's cover has turned somewhat heavy-handed as shown by the way he returned the precious stone to the authorities by slipping it into one of Lord Cantlemere's pockets.

A bit of trivia: I count three Percys set down in the accepted Canonical writings: Percy Armitage in SPEC, Percy Trevelyan in RESI, and Percy Phelps in NAVA.



## *What else happened in 1903:*

### *Empire*



Britain and France agree to settle disputes through International Court at The Hague.

British expeditionary force sent to Tibet.

◀ Exchange of visits between London and Paris; Arbitration Treaty establishes Entente Cordiale.

### *Britain*

Joseph Chamberlain begins Tariff Reform Campaign.

Women's Social and Political Union formed to demand votes for women.

GRW introduces early motor-bus service from Helston to the Lizard; the initiation of bus services largely originates from railway companies.

Wyndham's Act—Irish landlords to be bought out; peasant ownership; repayments over 68 and a half years.

Road speed limit in England increased to 20 mph.

### *World*

Dutch Democratic Labor Party formed; general strike suppressed by troops.

Russia refuses to evacuate Manchuria under terms of Russo-Japanese Convention.

Murstep Program—Austro-Russian proposals to solve Macedonian problems fails.

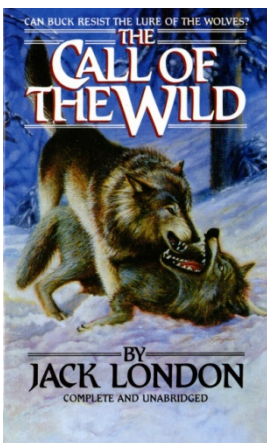
Alexander Obrenovitch and Queen Draga of Serbia assassinated; Peter Karageorgevitch elected king.

Belgium introduces Old Age Pension plan.

Foundation Bank of Persia loans with large Russian interests.

Russian massacre of Jews at Kishinyov.

### *Art*



Barrie writes his play, *The Admirable Critchton*.

◀ Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*.

Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*, a semi-autobiographical novel of middle-class life is published posthumously.

Shaw, *Man and Superman*.

### *Science and Technology*

First radio press messages published by *The Times*.

Tsiolkovski publishes paper on astronautics.

Henry Ford founds his motor company.

Orville and Wilbur Wright make their first flight in a heavier-than-air machine.

Wilhelm Einthoven invents the electro-cardiograph.

J.J. Thomson publishes *Conduction of Electricity through Gases*.

Bertrand Russell publishes *Principia Mathematica*.

Phenobarbitone, a long lasting sedative, developed.

*Next week's case: THOR*

Respectfully submitted,

*Murray, the Courageous Orderly*

(a.k.a. Alexander E. Braun)

"I should have fallen into the hands  
of the murderous Ghazis had it not  
been for the devotion and courage  
shown by Murray, my orderly..."

**If you would like to join the Hounds of the Internet, email us at [CourageousMurray@aol.com](mailto:CourageousMurray@aol.com).**