



*An Inquiry into:  
"The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist"*

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"The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist" was first published in *Collier's Weekly Magazine* on December 26, 1903, and in *The Strand Magazine* in January 1904. It is part of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*.

The table shows our chronologists calculations regarding the actual date of this case. Although this in one of the rare cases in which Doctor Watson provides us with the exact date in which it took place—

Saturday, April 23, 1895—he was mistaken. April 23, 1895 was a Tuesday. It may have been that he meant to refer to the day in which Violet Smith went home, which was a Saturday.

In 1895 Sherlock Holmes was 41 years old and Doctor John H. Watson 43.

***Main Characters:***

Violet Smith, an impoverished young lady working as a governess and Sherlock Holmes' client. Bob Carruthers, the solitary cyclist of Charlington, former prospector in South Africa and a widower with a daughter, Sarah. Jack Woodley, blackguard, partner in crime with Carruthers, recently returned from South Africa. Mr. Williamson, a disgraced unfrocked clergyman. Cyril Morton, Violet's fiancée and electrical engineer.

<i>The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist</i>	
<i>Chronologist</i>	<i>Date of the Adventure</i>
<i>Canon</i>	<i>Saturday [sic] April 23, 1895</i>
<i>Baring-Gould</i>	<i>Saturday, April 13, 1895</i>
<i>Bell</i>	<i>April 1895</i>
<i>Blakeney</i>	<i>Saturday, April 13, 1895</i>
<i>Brend</i>	<i>April 1895</i>
<i>Christ</i>	<i>Saturday, March 23, 1895</i>
<i>Dakin</i>	<i>Saturday, April 13, 1895</i>
<i>Folsom</i>	<i>Saturday, April 13, 1895</i>
<i>Hall</i>	<i>April 13, 1895</i>
<i>Keefauver</i>	<i>Saturday, April 20, 1895</i>
<i>Klinger</i>	<i>1895</i>
<i>Zeisler</i>	<i>Saturday, April 23, 1895</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.*

***Notable Quotes:***

"It is part of the settled order of Nature that such a girl should have followers."

"Who are you, then?"

"My name is Sherlock Holmes."

“Good Lord!”

## *A Bouquet of Violets*

This week’s Miss Violet Smith is one of four Violets that grace the pages of the Canon (excepting, of course, for the irksome and stupid Miss de Merville in *ILLU*). There is the faithful (and tragic) Miss Westbury, who entreated Sherlock Holmes to clear the honor and memory of her murdered fiancée,



Courtesy of ITV Granada

Cadogen West, from the false belief that he had absconded with the plans for the Bruce-Partington submersible. Finally, there is Miss Hunter who, in *COPP*, displayed such courage and so impressed the Great Detective with her manner and speech that he regarded her as an exceptional woman. This was so unusual in Holmes’ dealings with the most charming half of the human race, that it caused deep disappointment in Watson that our sleuth “manifested no further interest in her when she had ceased to be the centre of one of his problems.”

Based upon Holmes’ deduction that Violet Smith’s had “a spirituality about the face which the typewriter does not generate” when he

reached out to turn her face towards the light to better observe it, perhaps Watson hoped that his friend might finally have found someone to share his otherwise lonely existence with. And then there was that absolutely atypical remark about “the settled order of Nature.”

It has been most unjustly suggested, I think, that although Holmes’ interest in Miss Smith was purely intellectual, Watson took too much notice of her while his ailing wife was away! Of course, the Good Doctor’s interest was purely in his friend’s behalf in the hope, no doubt, that our sleuth might at last find someone to share his lonely life.

That being said, Dorothy Sayers, the noted Holmesian who created the redoubtable Lord Peter Wimsey, remarked—with an outsized serving of vinegar—that Miss Smith was far too independent and that men like Watson preferred their Violets to be of the clinging type.

## *The “Marriage” Attempt*

While, purely in principle, the dastardly plan that our two villains—Carruthers and Woodley—attempted to execute in which they would get the inheritance



Courtesy of ITV Granada

money due to Violet by one of them marrying her might have worked, It is difficult to believe that it could have been carried out in a more foolish and clumsy manner.

One need not have been apprenticed to a solicitor to realize



Courtesy of ITV Granada

that no marriage performed with one of the two parties under duress to participate could by any

stretch of the imagination be considered legal; especially if performed by an unfrocked cleric. Williamson's claim, "Once a clergyman, always a clergyman," is obviously baseless.

So what could Woodley have been thinking? It should have been obvious even to him that his "marriage" would have had no legal base at all. Did he really believe that the girl would sheepishly submit in the belief that she was his wife even though she clearly detested him? She was obviously very far from being that stupid. Her appeal to a corner constable would have put an end to the whole idiotic scheme.

### *A Brief Review of the Facts*

Holmes could have done much more for his client in this case. Prompted perhaps by his distrust of women ("Women are never to be entirely trusted,—not the best of them.") he did not take Violet



Courtesy of ITV Granada

Smith's case seriously enough in the beginning, which resulted in some very bad and dangerous results. By the time the Great Detective realized that in truth matters were far graver than what they seem to have appeared to be in the beginning, it was almost too late. Paradoxically enough, had it not been for Carruther's straight shooting, the whole affair might have had a very different and quite tragic ending.

However, one ought not to be too hard on Holmes. We easily become too used to consider him in the manner in which Watson once described him in GREE, "I found myself regarding him as an isolated phenomenon, a brain without a

heart, as deficient in human sympathy as he was pre-eminent in intelligence. His aversion to women and his disinclination to form new friendships were both typical of his unemotional character."

Like us, Sherlock Holmes was also human...

### *A Good Remuneration*

Although, with his usual discretion, Watson tells us nothing, it has been suggested that Violet Smith should have been able to turn over to Holmes a more than adequate fee. This would not have originated from her wages as governess, regardless of her "splendid salary" of £100, but rather from the large inheritance that was to come to her.

### *What else happened in 1895:*

#### *Empire*

Freetown, Sierra Leone, granted municipal status and privileges.

Anglo-French interests begin to conflict in Nile Valley.

U.S.A. intervenes in Anglo-Venezuelan border dispute, arbitration in Britain's favor.

Construction of Uganda railway commenced.

British East Africa Company surrenders Kenya as British protectorate.

Jameson Raid in South Africa in 1895--failed attempt to overthrow the Afrikaans government.

## Britain



Liberals defeated at general election, Salisbury forms his third Unionist ministry.

London School of Economics and Political Science founded.

First automobile exhibition in London.

◀ Compulsory retirement of aged Duke of Cambridge as C-in-C of British Army.

Electrification of first mainline railway.

Cardinal Vaughan lays foundation stone of Westminster Cathedral.

## World

Chinese defeated by Japanese at Wei-hai-Wei; end of the Chinese-Japanese war. Formosa (now Taiwan) and Port Arthur ceded to Japan, but returned to China in exchange for indemnity.

Germany, France, and Russia unite to compel Japan to return Liaotung peninsula to China.

Treaty of Simonoseki, end of Sino-Japanese war.

Cuban rebellions begin, U.S.A. protests brutal suppression.

Dreyfus refused new trial by French President Faure.

National League founded in Poland; aimed at autonomy under Russian suzerainty.

Nyssens Law extended to Belgian provinces and communes.

Armenian demonstration in Constantinople leads to massacre of 50,000 Armenians by order of the government. Britain sends squadron to Dardanelles, Austria recommends international naval action against Turkey, Russia prepares plans to seize Istanbul, but France's unwillingness to risk a general war hold back military action. Sultan Abdul Hamid II promises reforms in Turkey.



Frontiers of Pamirs fixed by commission of Russians, Afghans, and British.

◀ Jack Dempsey, future U.S. boxing champion, is born.

Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*.

Completion of Kiel Canal (61 miles) makes Germany North Sea power.

In France, socialist León Bourgeois defeats Alexandre Ribot and forms a cabinet.

Queen of Korea is assassinated; the King is imprisoned, all under Japanese encouragement.

Volleyball invented.

French troops capture Antananarivo in Madagascar.

Abyssinia defeats Italy in the First Italo-Ethiopian War (1885-1896).

## Art

Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* debuts. Later that year, he unsuccessfully sues the Marquis of Queensbury for libel and is imprisoned.



◀ H.G. Wells publishes *The Time Machine*.

Tchaikovsky, first complete performance of *Swan Lake*.

Joseph Conrad, *Alayer's Folly*.

Sienkiewicz, *Quo Vadis*.

W.B. Yeats, *Poems*.

Corelli publishes *The Sorrows of Satan*.

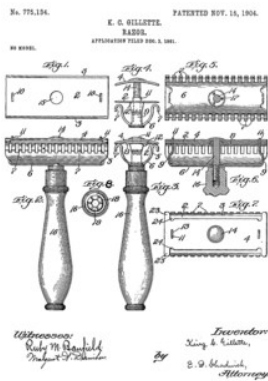
## Science and Technology

Wilhelm Konrad Röntgen, German physicist, experiments with Crooke's tubes and discovers X-rays.

Pasteur dies.

Ramsay obtains helium, first identified by its spectrum in the sun in 1868.

Konstantin Tsiolkovski formulates the principle of rocket reaction propulsion.



Sigmund Freud, *Studien über Hysterie*.

On December 28th, in the Hôtel Scribe, in Paris, the first public cinema show takes place.

Introduction of diphtheria antitoxin.

Thomas Armat, of Washington, develops modern cinema projection.

◀ King Gillette (U.S.A.) invents safety razor.

C. von Linde devices apparatus to liquefy air.

Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian electrical engineer, transmits the first wireless signal.

## Next week's case: *PRIO*

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).