

## **Sherlock Holmes on Cape Cod**

An account of the American trip of the great detective in the summer of 1912. Reported in the journal of Dr. Watson, as adapted by Bill Russo from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's enduring classics.

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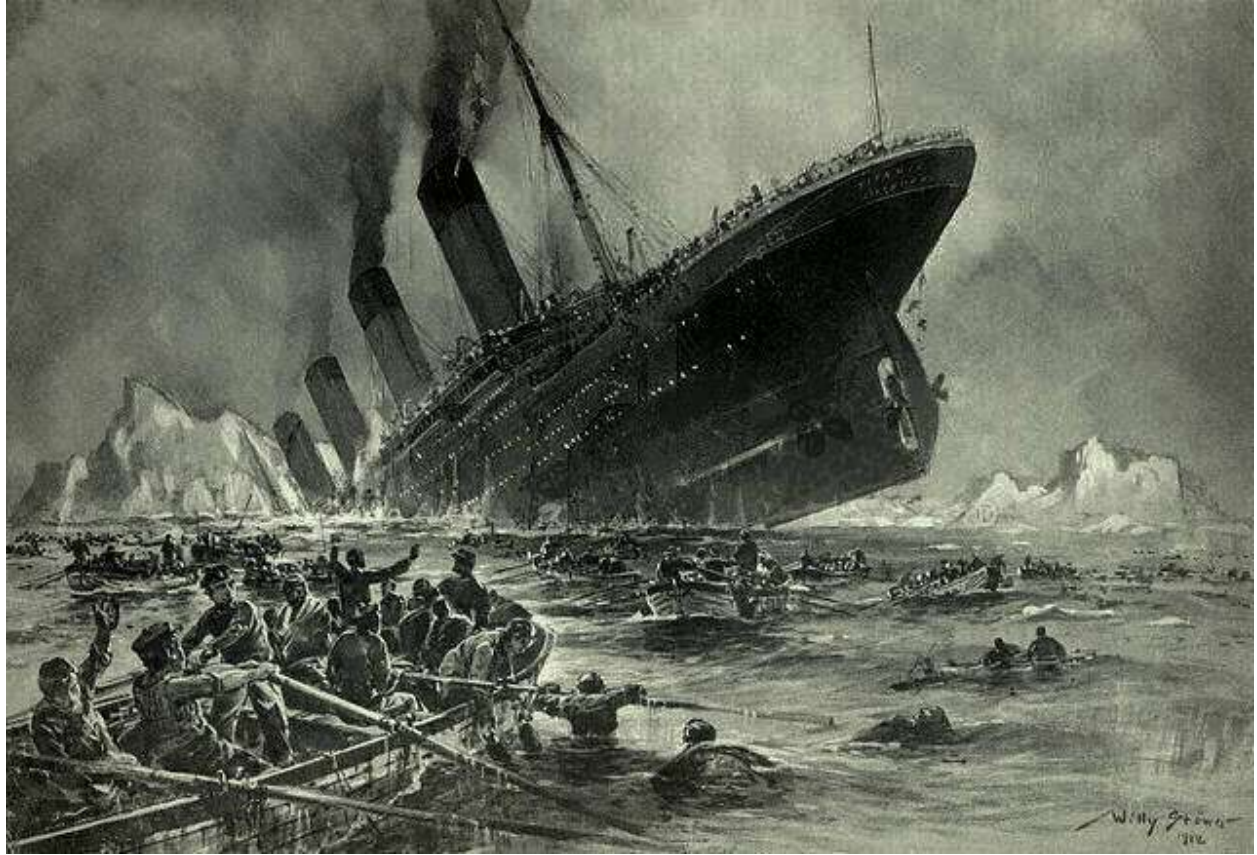
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From the journal of Dr. John Hamish Watson – as adapted by Bill Russo

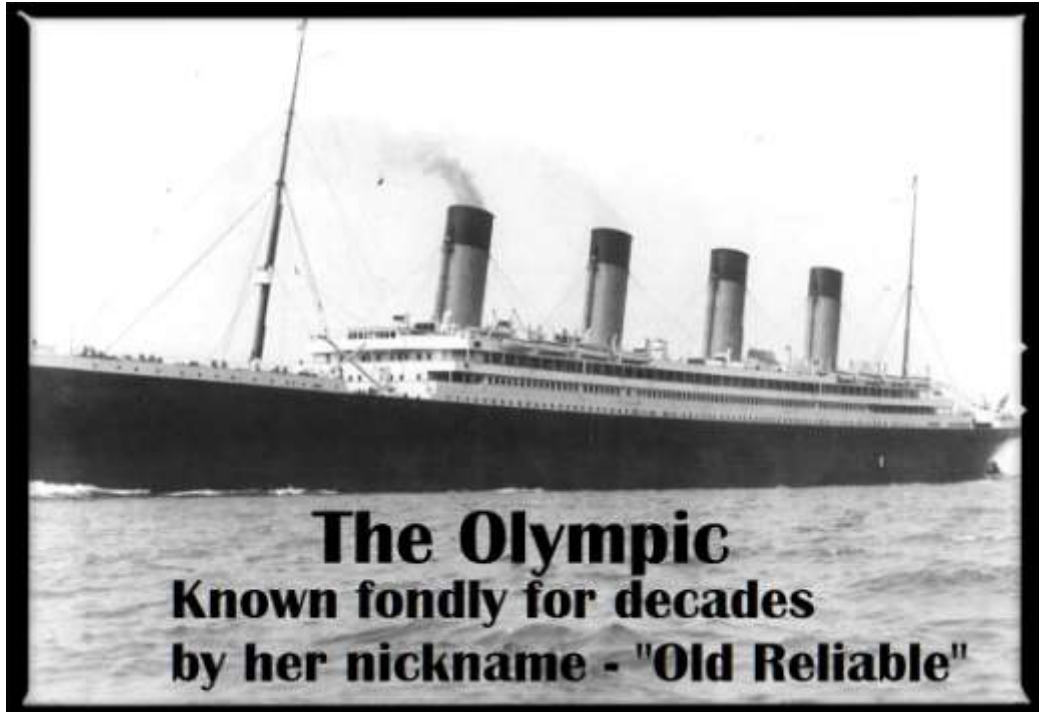
In the summer of 1912 Sherlock Holmes was devoting all of his energies to his retirement occupation of keeping his bees happy at his farm in Sussex. He hadn't so much as peered through a microscope in years, unless it was to examine the broken wing of a queen bee or some other such emergency in the hive.

My practice in London had grown so busy that I had three junior physicians working under me. We had opened a dispensary not far from the old flat at 221 B Baker Street, where we specialized in the care and treatment of Her Majesty's war veterans. Little did we know that we'd soon be needed more than ever as the planet was headed for an unprecedented Global War. But in that summer of the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the new century, there was little talk of anything other than the tragic sinking in April of the great British ship, the Titanic.

She sank on just the fourth day of her maiden voyage after being struck by an iceberg while enroute from Southampton to New York City. Of the 2200 people on board, less than 700 survived.



You can imagine then, my shock when I opened my morning mail and found two first class tickets to New York City on the Olympic, the Titanic's Sister Ship!



Just slightly smaller than the Titanic, the Olympic had been in service for over a year and was proving to be the finest luxury liner ever to fly the British flag. In future, during the 'Great War' she would volunteer for duty as a hospital ship and serve with distinction.

I do confess that I felt a little trepidation at the thought of a transatlantic crossing, just months after the catastrophe, but the letter that came with the tickets said that many lives were at stake. Not only that, it was reported to me in that correspondence, that Professor Moriarty had re-surfaced and was in the New England!

After reading that news, I knew I had to wrestle Holmes away from those little honey makers he was so fond of. I took the first train to Sussex. Just 50 minutes after leaving Victoria Station, I was transported on a fast buggy pulled by a team of twin bay mares and was at the great detective's front gate in another 20 minutes.

“Watson, my dear friend, it’s so good to see you. Come inside for a brandy and we’ll catch up!” he said as soon as he saw me.

We sat in a great dining hall at a table that could seat 12, but it didn’t take a great consulting detective to see that only one chair was regularly being occupied.

A neatly attired, attractive woman probably in her mid 50s or 60s served us our beverage along with a platter of chicken salad sandwiches and assorted sliced cheeses with olives and chips, freshly fried.

“It’s so nice to meet you Doctor Watson. Mr. Holmes talks of you all the time. I’m Mrs. Hammer. My aunt is your old friend Mrs. Hudson. She told me to make sure that Mr. Holmes doesn’t skip his meals, so I keep a close eye on him.”

“Be careful old fellow,” Holmes advised, “Hammer is her name and it is also what she does. If you don’t eat every single crumb of your sandwich you’ll see how much of a hammer she can be!”

The housekeeper laughed, said her goodbyes, and closed the dining room door leaving us to our private chat.

“So tell me Doctor, what brings you here? No, don’t tell me. Let’s see if I still have what it takes to be a consulting detective of the first rank.”

Holmes finished his sandwich, drained the last of his brandy and withdrew his famous curved pipe. Walking swiftly to a sideboard he filled it with an aromatic brand of tobacco, reminding me instantly of our many adventures of long ago.

Holmes sat back at the table and struck a match to light his pipe which soon began belching great clouds of fragrant smoke that circled his head.

“Ah now I am able to think in just the manner I did when we were the talk of London. I see that you are still working very hard Watson, but not especially hard at medicine. I suspect that you have some assistants now who do much of the actual ‘practice’ of medicine, while you are saddled with book keeping, collecting fees, and keeping up with the latest medical journals. It seems like you’re very prosperous too.”

“It’s true Holmes. I have three young physicians of the highest rank under me, an office full of nurses, and a secretary; but I have to handle the day to day affairs of the business. How did you know?”

“Elementary my dear Watson! You don’t have your stethoscope hanging round your neck and yet it’s obvious to me that you left your office in a hurry. If you’d been seeing patients there would be some tool of the trade on your person – but there is not. You’re wearing an expensive white shirt – I’ll wager it’s from Fenwick’s of Bond Street and set you back 14 pounds! Yet you have no necktie, meaning that you took off your tie to settle down to paperwork. You probably received some correspondence that has troubled you and you are here to consult me on a semi-professional basis!”

“You’re almost spot-on old friend. After all these years, I still don’t know how you do it. But you’re wrong on one point Holmes.”

“Which point is that, Doctor Watson?”

“I’m not here for myself. I’m here for a dozen people who have been murdered and for hundreds more who might be killed if Moriarty isn’t stopped!”

“Moriarty!” Holmes jerked backwards, stunned by the name of his worst enemy. “It cannot be. He’s finished. There is no more Moriarty. The Napoleon of Crime died, just as you wrote in your account, “The Final Problem”. He perished when we both plunged from the top of Reichenbach Falls.”

“My dear Holmes, in that story I also wrote that you died! You let the world believe for a time that you did indeed expire in the fall. Apparently Moriarty also survived. The letter I received this morning indicates that he did. Further, it states that he has moved his operations to America – specifically New England; or to be more exact a 64 mile long peninsula called Cape Cod! Here’s the letter Holmes, read it for yourself.”

The Russo Brothers

1734 Old Wharf Road

Dennis Port, Cape Cod

U.S.A.

July 19, 1912

Dear Doctor Watson,

Here in the United States we have long enjoyed your reports of the excellent work done by the famous consulting detective, Sherlock Holmes. As his valuable assistant, we are in hopes that you will contact him to assist the people of New England and indeed the whole world in a very important matter.

A strong-armed association calling itself The Codfish Benevolent Association (CBA) is poised to corner almost all of the Salt Cod exports of the United States. Headquartered here in Cape Cod, the CBA has already killed a dozen fishermen who refused to yield to their demands. They have forced all the seamen to sell their catch to them at a fraction of its true value. Once they have completed the takeover of all of the commercial wharves they will be able to demand exorbitant prices and will control a multi-billion dollar industry.

We are a group of six brothers whose interests are mainly in the steam fitting and construction business, but two of us are commercial fishermen. We are not afraid of a battle, but we have reliable information that the leader of the CBA is none other than Mr. Holmes' nemesis, Professor Moriarty. If this is true, and we believe it is, he will not stop with conquering the fishermen but will go on to other hateful schemes. He needs to be stopped before his operation spreads beyond the confines of Cape Cod.

Enclosed are two tickets for your passage to Boston as well as train tickets that will bring you to the Gray Gables railroad station, the welcome mat of Cape Cod. We'll meet you there Dr. Watson, and fill you in on more details. We will pay whatever fees and expenses necessary. Please phone me at Cape Cod 2177 to let me know if you and Mr. Homes will consent to help us and if you have any further questions.



Yours Sincerely,

Carmine Russo,

Head of the family Russo, after Papa.

...

“Do you know anything of these Russo people Watson?”

“Actually I do Holmes. They received a large amount of publicity last year when they captured the international criminal Cardenio Colucci.”

“Yes Watson I remember the case now. They grabbed him in an amusement park. He was carrying two suitcases which contained not clothing, but more than a million American dollars in cash!”

“His numerous businesses were about to fail Holmes, so he took all of the operating capital and tried to flee the country. He was wanted for a number of crimes in Italy as well as in the States. The Russo brothers earned rewards of almost 50,000 pounds for capturing the desperate fellow.”

“I think a little ocean voyage will be just the thing for me Watson. Mrs. Hammer and my staff can handle the bees. What about you? Are your people well enough trained to carry on without you for a month or two while we travel to the ‘new’ England!”

“Oh yes Holmes, I daresay, they’ll be glad to run on their own for a time. I probably watch them a little too closely you know. Detail Holmes. Detail. As I learned from you, always pay attention to the details!”

“Very good Watson. Let’s go straightaway to the pier and get on our ship.”

“Just a minute Holmes! There’s a little detail that I omitted to think about. I forgot the tickets, they are back at my office.”

“Watson how could you? With perhaps the fate of the whole world in.....”

“Just kidding Holmes. I just wanted to get a little rise out of you. Let’s go old fellow!”

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Watson and Holmes enjoyed favorable weather and a calm ocean in their seven day cruise aboard the world's largest luxury liner. The first class cabins were expansive and had private bathrooms. They took some of their meals in the main dining room and others in the more intimate A La Carte restaurant.

There were a number of elevators on board (called 'lifts' by Holmes and Watson). Other amenities included a swimming pool, a Turkish bath, a smoking room in Georgian style, a Veranda Café decorated with palm trees, and a gymnasium. Holmes frequented the Café and the smoking room regularly but disdained the gymnasium.

From Boston they boarded a train to Taunton where they changed to the Cape Cod line which ran all the way to Provincetown. Holmes became more animated and excited as each mile passed. Finally when the conductor called 'Gray Gables – next stop Gray Gables', he could take the inactivity no more. Rising from his seat, he began pacing back and forth in the coach to the chagrin of a few of the passengers that he nearly bumped into as they began to leave their seats and stand next to the exit doors.

"Holmes sit down a minute please before you get the entire train agitated."

"You're right of course, Watson. It's just that I can feel it in my bones. The game is afoot and it's been a long time between skirmishes for me. I can hardly contain myself Watson. Moriarty is close by, I can feel it."

Cape Cod Engine Number Two slowly ground to a noisy halt and Holmes and Watson fairly dashed down the three steps to the platform where they were greeted a rough looking group that they both hoped were the Russo Brothers.



A large man, close to six feet tall, with the build of a circus strongman stepped from the crowd and began walking toward Holmes and Watson. His head looked as smooth and slick as an artillery shell and his face seemed to be cut from steel. He was clean shaven with a jaw that could have been pulled from the handle of a sledgehammer.

“I’m Lucciano Russo, call me Lucca. I’ll be your bodyguard while you are here Mr. Holmes and yours too Dr. Watson,” he announced. “Please come with me and meet my brothers.”

A stern looking man with black curly hair and a well trimmed beard and mustache stepped up to join Holmes, Watson, and Lucca.

“I am Carmine Russo, oldest brother at 32, and head of the family after papa. It was me who wrote to you Mr. Holmes. We need your help really bad. Let me introduce you to my brothers then we can talk about the trouble.

“Lucca, the second oldest you already met. He was a sparring partner for the Living Giant, Jess Willard – the world’s greatest boxer. Lucca will accompany you and Doctor Watson everywhere. There is no trouble he cannot handle. The next oldest is Billy, who is 28. When he had “Second Sight” he was known as Cape Cod’s Figure in Black. It was him who led us to Carmine Collucci. He was a crook with a high reward on his head. You might have heard about that.”

“As a matter of fact, Watson and I were talking about that very thing while we were on the train. I was wondering why your ‘Figure in Black’ hasn’t been able to lead you to Moriarty.”

“Well Mr. Holmes,” Carmine answered, “It’s because he had a brain injury that gave him the second sight. But when he got better, he lost the special powers and abilities that he had.”

“Well Mr. Russo I’m happy that you’re healed,” Holmes replied, but in dealing with Moriarty we certainly could have used your powers of divination.”

“The other three brothers are Tony Jr, Bartolomeo, and Giovanni. Gio is an artist and he has drawn a sketch of what he thinks Moriarty looks like, based on descriptions given to him by the few who have actually seen the Professor.”

“Excellent,” said Holmes, “Let me see the drawing. I want to be sure that it is Moriarty we are after.”

Gio reached into his pocket and withdrew a piece of paper. He unfolded it and handed it to the great detective.

“It’s brilliant Gio!” raved Holmes. “That’s Moriarty for certain. You’ve captured his face perfectly and you’ve got him wearing the clothes he always appears in, the long coat and hat. Excellent work. Now take me to the men who gave you the details for this picture.”

“We can’t do that Mr. Holmes,” Carmine answered.

“Because anyone who has ever seen Moriarty is dead,” added Gio. “With their dying breath they gave me the details of his appearance.”



Drawing of Professor Moriarty - 1912

“Gentlemen, I swear to you that with your help, Dr. Watson and I will put an end to this madman’s reign of terror and murder. Now tell me why we are gathered here at Gray Gables – it’s not really Cape Cod.”

“Correct Mr. Holmes,” agreed Carmine, “but Gray Gables is often called the Welcome Mat to Cape Cod. The reason we are here is because since we wrote you, Moriarty has expanded his base of operations. A week ago, his henchmen had secured all 15 commercial wharves on Cape Cod. Since that time, they have also captured the wharves of the whaling cities of Fall River and New Bedford.”

“That’s the bad news Mr. Holmes,” said Billy. “It’s also good news in a sense because they now control about 85 per cent of the seafood market.”

“How can that be good news?” wondered Dr. Watson.

“Well Doctor, you’re right of course. It’s not really good news, but what I mean is that the 15 towns of Cape Cod and the cities of Fall River and New Bedford constitute almost the entire value of the Massachusetts seafood market. The catch from Boston and Gloucester and other towns some 150 miles from here are small in comparison. It’s likely that Moriarty will not expand beyond the present territory. So if we are going to catch him, it will be either in one of the 15 towns of Cape Cod or in Fall River or New Bedford.”

“So you think that he will not expand into Boston or the towns north of the city?” questioned Holmes.

“It’s unlikely Mr. Holmes. Boston is a large seaport and trade in hard-goods is significant but its seafood catch is small.”

Homes rubbed his hands together as if so doing would kindle an idea in his head that would start the adventure.

“Gentlemen, if I understand the situation correctly, it is likely that Moriarty is either in one of the fifteen towns of Cape Cod or he’s in Fall River or New Bedford.”

“No there’s another place he could be,” said Carmine. He might be where the fishes are.”

“Where would that be? In the water I presume,” suggested Dr. Watson.

“Yes the water Doctor, but not in all of the water,” advised Meo. “Billy and I are the fishermen of the family and we can tell you from long years of experience that the catch in the waters along the shoreline is fairly small. The real concentration of fish is in a place called George’s Bank. It’s a shallow fishing grounds about 100 miles east of Cape Cod. Fishermen from as far as Newfoundland gather there because it has such a high concentration of fish stock.”

“There are so many fishing boats in George’s Bank you could almost walk a mile from ship to ship and never get your feet wet!” added Billy. “It’s possible that he could be running the operation from a boat in the bank.”

“I don’t think so,” offered Holmes. “He would be at a disadvantage there. Not all the boats would be Cape Cod boats. He would need to be close to the wharves to properly control the mayhem. He’d want to be no more than a few minutes away from the action. Please now, tell me how he manages to take over a wharf.”

“Well, said Carmine, “he brings a gang of armed thugs to the wharf and as soon as a boat comes in, they board it like pirates and start roughing up the captain and crew until they agree to sign over their catch for pennies on the dollar. Those that don’t go along are brutally murdered. In the beginning quite a few men fought back – they are all dead. Nobody’s fighting back now, they’re too scared. Moriarty has a gang of between ten and twenty men staged in each town. So altogether he’s got a small army of about 300 of the toughest thugs and killers in the entire country.”

“What about your police?” wondered Watson. “Why haven’t they gotten involved?”

“They did get involved in the beginning,” said Carmine. “But since the first few killings, no one has dared to file a complaint. On top of that all of the fishermen have signed the paperwork that Moriarty forced on them. The papers state that they have joined the CBA of their own free will and that they have agreed to only sell their catch to the CBA.”

“Yes,” said Holmes, “That’s the way the diabolical Moriarty likes to work. He enjoys having a veneer of legality surrounding his mayhem. The next thing I need to know gentlemen is how the Salt Cod market functions. Tell me all about the operation from hooking the fish to barreling the catch for sale and shipping.”

“Billy and Meo can explain that,” said Carmine.



“The fishing business is changing Mr. Holmes. It’s been kind of a family business for thousands of years,” said Bartolomeo, (nicknamed Meo and pronounced mayo). Up until six years ago all fish were caught the way they have always been landed, by the use of a hook and a line. But in 1906 steam powered trawlers began appearing. They scrape the bottom of the ocean with nets and gather up everything that’s down there. One single trawler can out-fish 50 sailing vessels. But the trawlers also do horrible damage to the ocean floor. They should be outlawed, but they won’t be. Moriarty knows that trawlers are the future of fishing and he wants to get in right now, on the ground floor.”

“We still fish the traditional way,” said Billy. “We have three men in a boat, using fishing line and a hook. Here’s a picture that Gio drew of the process. You’ll see that one of us stands at the rail of the boat with the baited line with two hooks on it. The second man stands by with a gaff to help get the fish into the boat. Some Codfish weigh a hundred pounds or more – but every year we get fewer big ones due to the overfishing by the trawlers. The third man in the drawing is preparing the fish for salting. If we’re going to be out for less than a day, we don’t salt them. They can either be sold fresh or they can be put on racks and preserved by drying. If we’re going to be out more than a day, we have to preserve them by salting them right on board. We have to bring hundreds and hundreds of pounds of salt with us.”



Gio's drawing - Three men in a boat, one to catch, one to gaff, and a third to salt.

"The salted fish are packed in barrels and sometimes boxes," Meo picked up the story. "Dried fish are also put in similar containers. They are shipped all over the world. George's Bank is the second largest fishing area of its type in the world. Only the Grand Bank near Canada has a larger stock of Cod and Haddock," explained Carmine. But our bank is more accessible and has much more favorable weather, so it's more popular than any other fishing grounds."

"So you see Mr. Holmes that this is not just a Cape Cod problem. It has world-wide implications," advised Carmine.

"I do realize the implications of what you are saying gentlemen. I think that I can safely say that within 24 hours I will have at least half of the problem solved."

“How can that be Mr. Holmes? You’ve just heard about the problem?” wondered Carmine.

“I’d rather not say right at the moment in case it does not come out as planned, but I’m reasonably certain that it will. For now gentlemen, I suggest that Dr. Watson and I are ready for some of your best Cape Cod food and then we’ll get a good night’s rest and start on the problems before us first thing tomorrow morning.”

The Brothers took Holmes and Watson to the beautiful Newcomb Tavern overlooking Shawme Pond in the heart of Sandwich. The tavern was where Billy first met his future wife and where they were married. In a double ceremony, his brother Meo and Coleen O’Brien were also wed.

The Russo brothers had also fallen in love with the old tavern and purchased it. They still ran it as an inn, but frequently the 11 bedrooms were occupied by the Russo family themselves with little room for paying customers.

In the Inn’s elegant dining room, Holmes and Watson were treated to a New England style fish and chips dinner featuring deep fried cod, fried potatoes, quahogs, clams and corn on the cob with side dishes of spaghetti and meatballs.

After the meal they joined the Russo brothers for drinks in the beautifully designed ‘Old English Style Pub’ that opened out onto a terrace with a fountain and a lush view of the surroundings including the steeple of a nearby church. A soft summer breeze reached them. It was warm, but slightly cooled as it skimmed gently over Shawme pond. Scented by dancing through a field of pink and blue hyacinth, the zephyr wafted into the terrace where Holmes, Watson and the Russo brothers sat at glass top tables with curving ornamental wrought iron legs.

Holmes and Watson each had one of the front upstairs rooms overlooking the pond. Well over 200 years old, the tavern was still among the most elegant and comfortable on all of Cape Cod

As beautiful as the view was from their rooms, and despite the warmth of a summer evening, Holmes asked his hosts to build a fire for him in his room.

Later, sitting before the glowing fireplace, Watson questioned Holmes. “Why did you tell them you’ll have a partial solution to this problem in 24 hours? We don’t have the slightest clue as to where Moriarty is.”

“That’s true Watson. But I’m going to cable my brother Mycroft in London. As you know, he is in a position to push a lot of buttons. I’m going to ask him to condemn all Cod that is shipped in to England from Cape Cod. This will temporarily disrupt and distract Moriarty, while we get a better idea of where he’s hiding. Mycroft can tell the authorities that there’s a possibility of contamination of the product and that all barrels need to be examined before being released for sale. He can probably get the rest of Europe to join in on the temporary embargo. This action should buy us a week’s time and if we can’t solve this case by then, we should get out of the crime detection business and go back to dispensing pills and collecting honey!”

Holmes curved pipe was belching its customary great clouds of aromatic smoke. He commented that he was glad we had decided to have a fire in our grate, even though it was close to 65 degrees that evening.

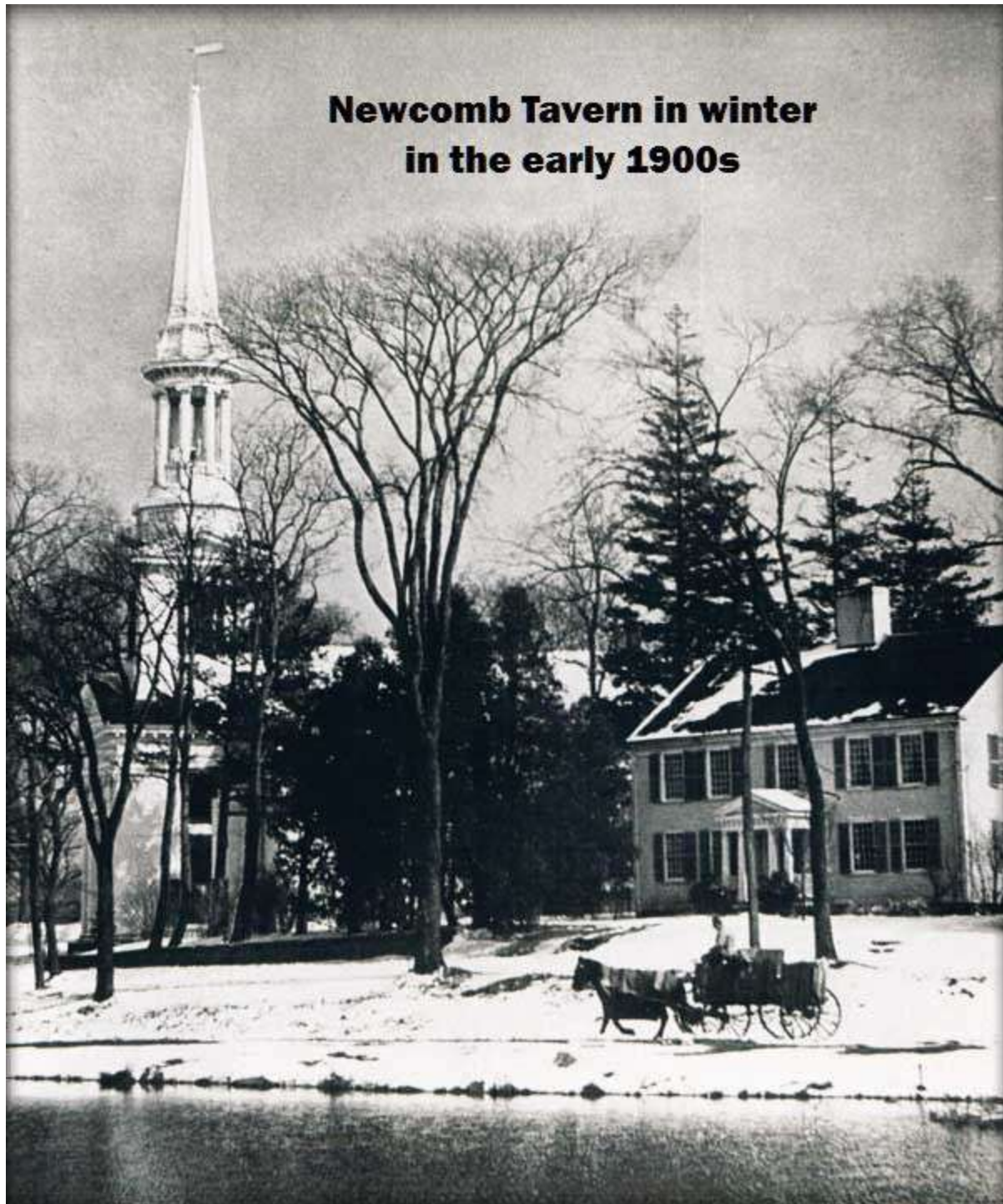
“It’s seems more like home with a fire going Watson. That’s why I wanted one even though our American friends thought it a bit odd when we requested they start one for us.”

At six the following morning Holmes was knocking on the door to my room and asking me if I was planning on sleeping the whole day away. He was in one of his moods where the nervous energy took over and drove him like a racehorse in a stretch run.

We had scarcely finished a quick breakfast before he had us racing off in a 1911 Ford Model T, piloted by Meo, with Lucca riding shotgun and Holmes and I sitting in the back seat.

Holmes was the first customer at the cable office and sent his message to Mycroft and then told Meo to find his brother Billy. Soon, with Billy piled into the back seat with us, the great detective told Meo to drive back to the tavern.

When we got back to the beautiful Inn, with all six brothers in attendance, Holmes laid out his plan. He explained that the first assault on Moriarty would be the embargo, which would do little more than purchase some time.



“During the next day or two while Moriarty is occupied with our counter attack, we have to find out where he is and stop him. I fear that capturing the Cod market is just his first step. The safety of your whole nation is at stake. It’s up to us to stop this fiend now while we still can.”

“Where do we begin?” questioned Carmine.

“We begin with your brother Billy. Bill, Watson has been kind enough to relate to me the details of your adventures when you were known by a different name – John Deer, the Cape Cod Figure in Black. You awoke in a Boston hospital with a horrible brain injury and a complete memory loss. The hospital did not expect you to live and they had already placed a toe tag on you. Since you had no identification when you were found, they had called you John Doe.”

“Yes Mr. Holmes that is true. But for some reason I did not want to be called a ‘doe’ – a female ferret, rat, deer and such. I said I didn’t want a feminine name, so the Doctor scratched out ‘John Doe’ and wrote in, John Deer. After I was released I found that I had the blessing/curse of ‘Second Sight’. At times it took over my body in unpleasant ways leading to spasms, massive headaches, and considerable pain. Other times I was in possession of knowledge of things to come. This allowed me to build a very tiny amount of money into a great fortune using advance knowledge of what would happen to certain stocks.”

“Billy, or John Deer as he was known then,” said Carmine, “had a sense that Provincetown at the very end of Cape Cod, held the key to what happened to him. He boarded the train in Boston and tried to get to the end of the line but at nearly every stop, he was forced by that gift/curse to get off the train and help total strangers who were in need. It was during this period that he saved all of Cape Cod when the Sandwich Glass Works was bankrupted by Cardenio Collucci. He knew Collucci was hiding in Salem and was looking to flee the country with millions of dollars stuffed into two suitcases he was carrying. “John Deer” contacted us and offered us \$50,000 to capture Collucci which we did. We had no

idea that “John Deer” was actually our brother, who was thought to have died in a shipwreck.”

“It’s a fascinating tale,” said Holmes. “And you should probably let Watson write it up for you. But what I want to know now Billy is this. After you regained your memory, you lost the “Second Sight” and yet Watson tells me that a young girl – a teenager in Provincetown took over as the new figure in black.”

“That’s true Mr. Holmes, this young girl Maria da Silva was a seer. She had been waiting for me and knew all about me. She told me that I was going to regain my memory and that she would be taking over my work of helping total strangers in need.”

“She may be the key to the whole problem, “said Holmes. “Where is she now? And secondly, can we go today and speak with her?”

“When she’s at home she lives with her parents in a small cottage by the sea off of Main Street in Provincetown. She may be there now. We can take the next train and be there in less than an hour.”



### Provincetown Railroad Station - 1912

Stepping off the train at the Provincetown Station, Holmes and his band of stalwarts hitched a ride in a hay-wagon to the da Silva cottage, where they found Mr. and Mrs. da Silva bound and gagged!

They explained that Moriarty himself had come and had kidnapped their daughter by gunpoint. They said that he knew that Holmes was in America and on his trail. Moriarty had forced young Maria to write a note for Holmes. It was lying on the kitchen table, held fast to the wood by a large circle of blood. The pool of blood had been partly absorbed by the paper.

“How did this happen?” Holmes asked.

“When he saw what she wrote he cursed her and drew a knife. He cut her hand. The wound is not life threatening,” said Mrs. da Silva but it was painful. “My poor



Maria. Mr. Holmes please help us.”

“Rest assured that we will rescue Maria and she will come to no further harm,” Holmes said in a soft, sympathetic voice. But first I must read the letter. I have an idea why Moriarty was angry and he has made a fatal mistake. Instead of cutting Maria, he should have cut that piece of paper to shreds.”

The Russo brothers, Watson, and the da Silvas wondered what Holmes meant. They hoped he would soon explain.

“I’ll read this note aloud,” Holmes said. “Listen carefully and think about every single line. Here’s what it says.....

“Mr. Holmes. Professor Moriarty knows that you are on Cape Cod. He said that as sure as the swallows fly east and fishermen cast their lines, you cannot catch him. He said to tell you that I will be killed as the church bell strikes eight, three nights hence, unless you leave Cape Cod right away. If you persist in trying to find him, I will die.

Maria da Silva

That my friends,” said Holmes “is the entire text of what she wrote. Did you gain any clues from it?”

“There’s nothing to be learned from that letter Holmes except that if we do not find him by eight p.m. three nights from now, Maria will die by his unholy hand,” offered Watson.

The rest of the group agreed that there was little of value in the letter except for the fact that they had three days to find the arch criminal, if they were to save Maria’s life.

“I think I did get one clue from the note Mr. Holmes,” said Billy.

“What is it that you detected?” queried Holmes.

“I think that Maria could read Moriarty’s mind. I believe that as she was writing the message she was trying to tell us where she’s being held captive. Since she mentioned the bells, she must be near the church!”

“Excellent deduction Bill,” Holmes praised, “I think there may be some of John Deer left in you yet! Here’s what else she told us. The part about the swallows heading east means two things. Firstly, that we are to walk to the East to find her. Secondly the swallows do not refer to birds. What then do you think she means by ‘swallows’?”

“Swallows of rum, I’d guess,” said Tony.

“Right you are Tony. She was telling us that she will be held in a room above a tavern. But what tavern will she be in?”

“We’ve no way of knowing that Holmes!”

“Yes we do Watson! She told us. It was the part about the fishermen! Don’t you see? She talked about fishermen casting their lines. She was telling us that she will be in a place where fishermen gather and their ‘lines’ are their tales of the sea and their adventures. Now what I need from you Mr. and Mrs. da Silva, is the name of the tavern, east of here, where fishermen gather to swap their yarns and drink their rum and ale.”

“Well the most popular place for fishermen is the Rod and Cod Inn on East Commercial Street,” said Mr. da Silva.

“That is where she will be!” affirmed Holmes.

“I am going alone,” said Holmes, overruling the protests of Watson and all the rest. “It is personal. It has to be just me and Moriarty. He is my responsibility. I should have made certain he was dead during ‘The Final Problem’. I’ll not repeat the error!”

Waiting until dark, Holmes prepared to scale the rear wall of the Rod and Cod Inn. With the skill of a circus performer, he shinnied up a drain pipe and pulled himself up to the roof. He guessed at three possible rooms that might hold Maria. Two of

the windows revealed only darkness. He crept towards the window that was casting light. From above he laid down on his stomach on the roof and gradually inched himself outward. He stretched his neck but was not able to see into the window, the bottom section of which was open. He carefully scooted forward until fully half of him was hanging over the roof. He was able to peer inside and verify that Maria was in the room. She was bound and gagged in a chair set against an interior wall.

Holmes slid through the window and lifted his finger to his lips to signal Maria to keep quiet, though since she was gagged this was probably not needed. As a matter of fact, it would not have made a difference if she had been able to shout a warning, for Moriarty was poised and ready for Holmes. He stepped from behind a dressing panel, with a loaded revolver aimed directly at the head of the famed consulting detective.

“Ah Moriarty congratulations. You are running a wonderful scheme here on Cape Cod. But knowing you as well as I do, there must be more to this plan than just cornering the fish market. Surely the great Professor Moriarty hasn’t sunk that low.”

“My dear Mr. Holmes. The ‘fish market’ as you put it, is a billion dollar industry. That’s hardly chicken feed – or fish feed either. But you are right. Since you’ll be dead in a minute, I don’t mind telling you that I like this new world, this America. I am going to take it all - the whole country for myself. I’ve managed to capture all of Cape Cod and the South Coast in just a few weeks. In a month I’ll own the whole state, or at least the politicians and law enforcement people who run it. After I capture all of New England, I’ll take over New York and New Jersey. It’s easy Holmes. All you have to do is get the governor, the police chiefs, and a bunch of judges in your pocket. Once you own the law, you are the law! (meaning me of course and not you Holmes!)”

“Moriarty, Moriarty. You poor fool,” said Holmes. “I used to think that you were the Napoleon of Crime. Now I see you for the fool you are. Did you think I would come here alone? Did you not hear that I have a body guard? He is a mountain of a man named Lucca Russo who once took the measure of the Living Giant, Jess

Willard, the boxing champ. Lucca is behind you right now. He moves very quietly for one so powerful.”

Moriarty laughed heartily at Holmes joke.

“Holmes, you are so funny for a stern and serious man. I almost regret having to kill you. Do you really think that I would fall for that old ruse.”

“Yes Moriarty. I think you will fall right now.”

He did.

He crumpled like an accordion stepped on by an elephant when Lucca Russo thumped him over the head with one of his huge hammering fists.

“Lucca, you are surely the best bodyguard ever and I’m so glad you showed up when you did,” said Holmes.

“My brothers said there was no way we were going to let you meet this devil alone. They’re outside. Come on in brothers!”

Maria was untied and happily met and greeted everyone.

“My friends,” Holmes said, “you probably heard what Moriarty said. He plans to take over your whole country. You have a democracy. It’s a wonderful system of government but it’s something like a person who trusts everyone too much. Sadly there is room in your system for people like Moriarty to slip through the cracks. Why this old devil is so cunning, he could probably even be elected your President if he set his mind to it. “

“I should kill him right now,” Holmes continued. “He’s little more than a mad dog and he needs to be snuffed out, but I am constrained. As an upholder of the law, in a sense my work is encumbered by invisible handcuffs and other restraints. I’d like to shoot him right now, but I cannot. Instead I’ll turn him over to the law. Maria, you have the “Second Sight”. If I turn him over to the law, what will happen to him?”

“Nothing,” Maria replied. “He has henchmen everywhere, even among the police. If we load him on the train right now, he will escape long before he ever reaches Boston for trial.”

“And yet,” said Holmes. “That is what we must do, because we cannot sink to his level. Doing so, would indeed make us his equal.”

True to his word Holmes had Moriarty arrested and escorted to jail on the train accompanied by two deputies. The two lawmen escorted Moriarty off the train at Gray Gables where the three of them were met by a seven passenger Packard sedan driven by one of Moriarty’s key thugs. They drove off to a hideout near the town of Plymouth where Moriarty would try to recover from Holmes’ intervention.

Holmes said goodbye to his new friends but not to America. He vowed to stay in the United States as long as Moriarty still lived. He told me that when next he met Moriarty he would offer the Professor a wager.

“It will be winner-take-all Watson. I’m going to propose a duel to him. The winner will walk away with no charges. Knowing Moriarty as I do, I think he will take the bet.

The End

As attested by the journal of Dr. John H. Watson, July 29, 1912 - adapted by Bill Russo.

Thanks for reading about my imagined visit of Mr. Holmes to Cape Cod. If you liked the story, please consider leaving a review on the site where you got it.

### **About the Author:**

Bill Russo is the author of *The Creature from the Bridgewater Triangle and Other Odd Tales from New England*; in which he recounts his meeting with a swamp creature called a Puckwudgie. His blog about that scary encounter led to an appearance in the award winning documentary, *The Bridgewater Triangle*. He also was also featured on national television in 'Monsters and Mysteries in America' and 'America's Bermuda Triangle'.

A number of his fictional works are centered in the Bridgewater Triangle, where he says "Fantasy and reality are crowded together into a haunted 200 square mile area of Massachusetts - where they share an uneasy truce".

Parts of this story are adapted from "Cape Cod's Figure in Black" which introduces John Deer and the Russo Brothers, as well as the little girl from Provincetown who becomes the new 'seer' of the Cape.

'Swamp Tales' and its prequel, 'Jimmy Catfish' take readers deep into Southeastern Massachusetts and neighboring Cape Cod for various adventures involving ghosts, monsters, and a strange amphibious boy who swims with, and leads, a school of shark-like, killer catfish.

In 'Ghosts of Cape Cod', Russo does not write the typical tale of people waking up and seeing spectral beings at the foot of their bed; rather, he probes into the fascinating lives of the real people who became the legendary 'haunts' of one of the most popular tourist destinations in the United States.

Many of the 'Ghosts' are well known such as the real 'Pirate of the Caribbean', Sam Bellamy. He was Captain of the Whidah - the richest prize ship in history. Others are lesser known but no less fascinating, like the Reverend Joseph Metcalf who owned the first of the once ubiquitous Cape Cod Flower Boats. The story of the Ghost of the 13 Churches is told in detail for the first time. It's an odd yarn of a peculiar doctor who amassed one of the biggest fortunes in Colonial Massachusetts. He gave it away to the 13 churches of Cape Cod when he died; but then returned from the grave to take it all back!

The Ghosts of Cape Cod audio book is available at all major retailers. The narration is by Scott R. Pollak of National Public Radio.

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Bill Russo, retired on Cape Cod, was educated in Boston at the Huntington School and at Grahm College in Kenmore Square. He was editor of several newspapers in Massachusetts as well as a former disc jockey, news writer/presenter, and broadcaster for various outlets in New England.

His other employment included management positions in logistics and warehousing as well as a stint as an ironworker and President of Boston Local 501 of the Shopmen's Ironworkers Union.

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