

**SHERLOCK HOLMES
AND THE
WOLF FAMILY
CAPER**



John Donald O'Shea

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE WOLF FAMILY CAPER

OR, BLAME IT ON THE BIG BAD WOLF

INTERACTIVE CHILDREN'S MYSTERY. In this adorable "Law and Order" type mystery, the audience is called upon to help out Sherlock Holmes and his sidekick, Dr. Joan Watson, solve the mystery of "The Wolf Family Caper." Holmes and Watson are investigating the mysterious case of two missing pigs. Not only have the pigs disappeared, but a straw house and a stick house have vanished as well. Just when Holmes and Watson begin to think they have a serial house-napper on the loose, they discover a single paw print at the scene, which gives rise to the Huff-and-Puff Theory. Suspecting a wolf may be the culprit, Holmes and Watson pay a visit to Ezekiel Wolf, the owner of a pork processing plant. When the duo suggests that a wolf may have huffed and puffed and blew the houses down, Mr. Wolf's hair bristles at the theory, and he insists that such stories are just old wives' tales. And, besides, he suffers from emphysema. As Holmes and Watson continue their investigation, they discover that all clues lead back in some way to the Wolf Family Picnic Extravaganza...

Performance Time: Approximately 90-120 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(4 M, 10 F, 2 flexible)

(Doubling possible.)

SHERLOCK HOLMES: World's greatest detective investigating the case of two missing pigs and their houses.

DR. JOAN WATSON: Filling in for her brother as Sherlock Holmes' assistant; female.

SALLY SUPERGLU: Police forensics expert; female.

GRETA VON CISTERN: TV reporter investigating the case.

BEULAH BERKSHIRE: Mother pig whose two sons have gone missing; wears an unstylish housedress that suggests she may live on an English farm.

DUROC "ROCKY" LANDRANCE: Beulah Berkshire's daughter who looks more like a male pig and lives in a cozy brick home; female, but can be played by a male dressed as a female.

ROSEMARY RAZORBACK: A pig who lives next door to Beulah Berkshire's missing son's stick house; wears a wedding ring; female.

BECKY BERKSHIRE: Attractive pig ingénue and girlfriend of one of the missing pigs.

HARRY LUPUS: Wolf who owns the Boars-R-Us restaurant; alpha-male type who wears a suit, tie, shirt with French cuffs and eye-popping cufflinks; male.

WILEY FOX: Fox who serves as Harry Lupus's attorney; flexible.

LOUIE LOBO: Wolf who runs a meat-packing business on West Wolfie Street; has many friends who are swine; male.

EZEKIEL WOLF: Wolf who owns a pork processing plant; alpha-male who suffers from emphysema due to smoking pork in his smokehouse.

RUTH DEWOLF: Wolf who owns DeWolf Hauling and Excavating Company; female.

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MRS. WOLFGANG "WOLFIE" VON WOLFE: Wealthy wolf in charge of the Wolf Family Picnic Extravaganza and a well-known socialite and society matron; female.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD: High school actress; voice only.

NOTE: For flexible roles, change the script accordingly.

SETTING

The City of Grand Wallow.

SET

The sets are designed to be minimal. No set change should take more than 15 seconds. The set pieces required are a desk or counter, 2-3 chairs, and a desk phone. The desk or counter can be put on castors for easy movement.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- Scene 1:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.
- Scene 2:** Holmes's apartment.
- Scene 3:** Vacant lot.
- Scene 4:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.
- Scene 5:** Holmes's apartment.
- Scene 6:** Harry Lupus's office.
- Scene 7:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.
- Scene 8:** Holmes's apartment.
- Scene 9:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.
- Scene 10:** Vacant lot.
- Scene 11:** Holmes's apartment.
- Scene 12:** Holmes's apartment, a few minutes later.
- Scene 13:** Louie Lobo's warehouse office.
- Scene 14:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.
- Scene 15:** Vacant lot.
- Scene 16:** Holmes's apartment.
- Scene 17:** Ezekiel Wolf's meat processing plant.
- Scene 18:** Wolf Memorial Park.
- Scene 19:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.
- Scene 20:** Harry Lupus's office.
- Scene 21:** Harry Lupus's office, a short time later.
- Scene 22:** DeWolf Hauling and Excavating Company office.
- Scene 23:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.
- Scene 24:** Holmes's apartment.
- Scene 25:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.
- Scene 26:** Harry Lupus's office.
- Scene 27:** Holmes's apartment.
- Scene 28:** Holmes's apartment.
- Scene 29:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.
- Scene 30:** Ezekiel Wolf's meat processing plant.
- Scene 31:** Ezekiel Wolf's office.
- Scene 32:** Below the stage or in front of the curtain.

PROPS

Pen	Shoulder bag
Papers	Yellow crime scene tape
Laptop computer (opt.)	Camera
Magnifying glass	Large stick
Pieces of straw	Board with "2112" written on it
Sticks	Record book
Pieces of siding	Note
Black wooden tuning peg for a violin	2 Cufflinks
Microphone	Yearbook
Photos	Speaker
2 Tickets	Meat cutter's apron
\$20 bill	Desk phone
3 Cell phones	2 Toy guns
Pile of sticks and straw	Small TV
Pile of cedar siding	VCR
2 Large tarps	

SOUND EFFECTS

Cell phone ringing	Sound of car pulling up
Desk phone ringing	Sound of overhead door opening
Sound of garage door opening	Sound of overhead door closing
Sound of garage door closing	

**"THIS IS THE 21ST CENTURY.
WE LIVE IN CIVILIZED TIMES.
NO SELF-RESPECTING WOLF
RUNS AROUND THESE DAYS
HUFFING AND PUFFING
AND BLOWING HOUSES DOWN."**

—EZEKIEL WOLF

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Spotlight up on Dr. Watson, who is below the stage or in front of the curtain.)

WATSON: (To audience.) If you have read my brother's published accounts of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," you are no doubt aware the great service that has been rendered to Mr. Holmes by a group of street urchins, whom Holmes refers to as the "Baker Street Irregulars." Mr. Holmes is in dire need of their assistance here, but, unfortunately, the Irregulars have formed a traveling soccer team and are off at a tournament. That's why I've assembled you here. From what Holmes has told me, one of your fellow citizens is missing. He suspects foul play. And now, in what can only be described as an extraordinary turn of events, it seems that the world's foremost detective and I have come to an utter and complete dead end. As remarkable as it may seem, my friend Holmes is stumped. But perhaps before we proceed further, I should introduce myself. Some of you out there—those who enjoy reading detective stories—no doubt already know my illustrious brother, Dr. John H. Watson, late of her Majesty's medical service in India. My brother has served as confidant and biographer for Mr. Holmes and has for some while shared lodgings with Holmes at 221 B Baker Street. I am John's younger sister, Dr. Joan Watson. I make my residence at 221 F Baker Street. I confess that I am only here because my brother off on a frolic. It seems that my brother was invited by Mycroft Holmes, Sherlock's brother, to spend a week trout fishing in Scotland. I am, as you might say, standing in for my brother. Somebody has to record the exploits of Sherlock Holmes for posterity. Two days ago, a real sweet, not to mention somewhat overweight, and not overly bright lady named Beulah Berkshire appeared at Holmes' Baker

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Street lodgings. Mrs. Berkshire was concerned about her son. He was missing. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: Holmes's apartment. Holmes is sitting in a chair and Beulah Berkshire is sitting in a nearby chair. Beulah is dressed in a rather unstylish housedress that suggests she may be a woman who lives on an English country farm.)

BEULAH: You are not listening to me, Dr. Watson.

HOLMES: As I have previously stated, madam, my name is Holmes. Sherlock Holmes. I am not Dr. Watson and he is not presently here.

BEULAH: Watson! Holmes! What difference does it make?

HOLMES: Watson doesn't play the violin, madam!

BEULAH: What difference does that make? I'm here because my son has vanished.

HOLMES: Yes, I believe that is precisely what you have previously stated. Are you certain that he just hasn't taken a long weekend out of town?

BEULAH: Chester would never leave town without telling me.

HOLMES: Is there any possibility he may have gone out of town to a soccer tourney...perhaps with the "Baker Street Irregulars"?

BEULAH: You're not listening to me, Dr. Watson. I'm his mother.

HOLMES: Then he should have let you know where he was going. And my name is *Holmes*.

BEULAH: I am trying to tell you that Chester would never leave town without telling me.

HOLMES: How can you be so certain?

BEULAH: (*Warmly.*) Because he loves me. (*Hostile.*) Because he knows that when he gets back, I'd kill him!

HOLMES: Ah! That makes perfect sense. All right, let me get further information. (*Gets out a pen and paper or types info into a laptop computer.*) What's his full name?

BEULAH: Chester White.

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HOLMES: White? But you said your name is Berkshire.

BEULAH: When I was young, I was in show business...county fair circuit.

HOLMES: So, then, you kept your maiden name?

BEULAH: Correct. Chester's father was my third husband. He was a White.

HOLMES: Now I see. His age?

BEULAH: His father's?

HOLMES: Chester's.

BEULAH: Twenty-one.

HOLMES: When was the last time you saw him, Mrs. Berkshire?

BEULAH: When he divorced me. Three years ago.

HOLMES: Your *son*, madam.

BEULAH: Friday, about 5:30. I was just putting popcorn in the microwave.

HOLMES: How long did he stay?

BEULAH: Just long enough to pick up his high school yearbook. He was in a hurry. He said he had to pick up his date.

HOLMES: Did he mention the name of his date?

BEULAH: No, sir.

HOLMES: Has he been dating anyone in particular?

BEULAH: Not that I know of.

HOLMES: Are you saying you have no idea at all?

BEULAH: All I can tell you is that before he got his own place, the girls were calling him all the time. Lots of them.

HOLMES: Would you be so kind as to give me his physical description?

BEULAH: I'd have to say he's uncommonly handsome.

HOLMES: I'm sure he is but that's not quite what I meant, madam. (*To audience.*) I get that every time I ask a mother.

BEULAH: Oh, you wanted a more detailed description?

HOLMES: Indeed. That would be a good deal more helpful, Mrs. Berkshire.

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BEULAH: Well, he has sort of warm pinkish skin and medium-sized droopy ears.

HOLMES: What about his hair, madam?

BEULAH: He has white hair. He wears it rather short.

HOLMES: Can you remember what he was wearing the last time you saw him?

BEULAH: I think he had on a green bowtie.

HOLMES: Nothing more?

BEULAH: Of course he was wearing more, but that's all I can presently remember.

HOLMES: How big was he, ma'am?

BEULAH: Oh, he was a very nice size.

HOLMES: Again, my good woman, could you be a bit more precise?

BEULAH: I'd say he goes about six feet.

HOLMES: His weight?

BEULAH: Between 230 and 250 pounds. But he wasn't fat. He had a nice solid, long body.

HOLMES: I daresay, as a kid, he must have eaten you out of house and home!

BEULAH: Oh, yes. He used to eat like a little pig, but now he watches his weight.

HOLMES: Is he your only child, madam?

BEULAH: No, I have two others: Duroc and Yorky.

HOLMES: Both of whom are boys?

BEULAH: Yorky's a boy. Duroc's my daughter, but she is sometimes mistaken for a boy.

HOLMES: I see. Why is that, madam?

BEULAH: Because she looks like a boy. She takes after her father.

HOLMES: You did say his name was Chester?

BEULAH: Her father?

HOLMES: No, your *son*.

BEULAH: That's right. Chester White.

HOLMES: Where does he live?

BEULAH: He lived in a cute little bungalow over on Hampshire Avenue...2112 Hampshire.

HOLMES: Lived? What precisely do you mean when you say, "lived"?

BEULAH: He doesn't live there anymore.

HOLMES: Are you quite certain? Have you checked out his house?

BEULAH: Of course, I checked his house. That's the first thing I did.

HOLMES: When precisely did you check it out?

BEULAH: This morning. Monday morning.

HOLMES: And?

BEULAH: It's gone, too.

HOLMES: His house is gone, too?

BEULAH: That's what I've been trying to tell you. That's why I came here.

HOLMES: So, you're telling me that both your son *and* his house are missing?

BEULAH: That's precisely what I've been telling you.

HOLMES: It's really quite remarkable. Tell me exactly what you saw when you went to Chester's house?

BEULAH: I saw a vacant lot.

HOLMES: You mean a vacant lot...with nothing on it?

BEULAH: I didn't find so much as a single piece of straw.

HOLMES: *Straw*, madam?

BEULAH: Yes, straw.

HOLMES: I don't quite understand, ma'am.

BEULAH: Chester built his house out of straw.

HOLMES: What sort of nitwit builds his house out of straw?

BEULAH: The impractical sort...like my son. He spends all his free time fiddling around. But then, I suppose, he's no different from most violinists.

HOLMES: (*Insulted.*) Please, madam, I play, and I assure you that he and I could not be more different. Is there any chance one of his neighbors didn't like the way he played?

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BEULAH: My son was a brilliant violinist. Whoever kidnapped my son did it for other reasons.

HOLMES: Are you, then, suggesting your son might be the victim of foul play?

BEULAH: Most foul. I think he's been murdered...
(Blackout.)

SCENE 3

(AT RISE: *An empty lot. The stage is bare. Holmes and Watson are making a careful search of the lot.*)

HOLMES: Well, my friend, not much evidence of a straw house around here.

WATSON: Perhaps, old fellow, something ate it.

HOLMES: Like what, Watson?

WATSON: How about a horse?

HOLMES: Horses don't eat straw. They eat hay.

WATSON: Hay! Straw! What's the difference?

HOLMES: This may seem incredible to you, but I really don't know. Ask a horse.

WATSON: Well, perhaps the horse didn't know, either.

HOLMES: All I do know is that horses eat hay and sleep on straw.

WATSON: Well, then, there you are! Maybe a horse took it for a bed.

HOLMES: Yes. Or maybe a robin took it to build a nest.

WATSON: I say, Holmes, look! I think I've found something.

(*Holmes crosses to Watson.*)

HOLMES: Have you now? What have you found?

WATSON: (*Using a magnifying glass.*) My guess, old man, is that it's a piece of straw.

HOLMES: You don't suppose that Mrs. Berkshire was right after all?

WATSON: Look, Holmes, one piece of straw does not a house make!

HOLMES: Elementary, my dear Watson. Indeed, it could have been dropped by a bird.

WATSON: Uncanny, Holmes, uncanny. However do you do it?

HOLMES: (*Examining the strand of straw.*) But, then, of course it wasn't! Observe, dear friend, that there is no crease or depression whatsoever in this strand of straw indicating that it has been carried in the beak of a bird.

WATSON: (*Looking at the strand of straw.*) Quite so!

HOLMES: The condition of the specimen, therefore, leads me to infer that this specimen has never, in fact, been carried in a bird's beak and that in all probability it was at one time, in the not so distant past, an integral part of a straw residence.

WATSON: Positively brilliant, Holmes! Brilliant! Your adductive prowess never fails to amaze me! But then again, Holmes, can you be certain that we're not dealing with what is known in the American vernacular as a "wacko"?

HOLMES: Why do you ask, Watson?

WATSON: Who in their right mind would build a straw house?

HOLMES: Elementary, my friend. Someone who didn't know how to lay bricks.

WATSON: But the joint would be a fire trap.

HOLMES: Some people prefer to keep their homes a bit warmer. What puzzles me is this: who in their right mind would steal a straw house?

WATSON: Elementary, my dear Holmes. A 200-pound canary!

HOLMES: Watson, Mrs. Berkshire didn't come across as a fruitcake.

WATSON: But, then, you told me she was in show business.

HOLMES: What are you saying?

WATSON: It's the same thing. You know how convincing actresses can be...even when they're goofy. Recall your strange adventure with Irene Adler...

HOLMES: I have asked you before not to refer to *that woman*.

WATSON: She did get the better of you, didn't she? Well, there doesn't seem to be anything more to do here. I suggest we return to Baker Street. I'd like to record our doings today while they are fresh in my mind.

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HOLMES: But we are no closer to solving this mystery. What good will that do?

WATSON: At a minimum, it will get me off my flat feet. They hurt.

HOLMES: I think you should at least talk to the neighbors.

WATSON: What neighbors? There isn't a house within 500 feet in any direction.

HOLMES: Watson, don't you think it's strange the weeds here have been mowed?

WATSON: My guess is that a bunch of neighborhood kids built their soccer field here.

HOLMES: In that case, there should be worn down areas around the goals.

WATSON: Good lord, Holmes! You're right.

HOLMES: Do you see any?

WATSON: No.

HOLMES: What's that... *(Points.)* ...over there?

(Watson approaches the object and picks it up. It is a black wooden tuning peg from a violin.)

WATSON: I'm not sure.

(Watson hands the tuning peg to Holmes.)

HOLMES: That, my friend, is because you never played the violin.

WATSON: Right again, Holmes. Brilliant! *(Slight pause.)* So what?

HOLMES: Watson, this is a... *(Cell phone rings. Into phone.)* Holmes, here...What?...Is that so! *(Hangs up.)* I think we better get back to the apartment post haste.

WATSON: Very well. What's up?

HOLMES: That was Mrs. Hudson. She says a very attractive young lady just turned up claiming her boyfriend is missing.

WATSON: Think there's any connection?

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HOLMES: Without question. She says her boyfriend is
Chester White. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 4

(AT RISE: Spotlight on Watson, who is below the stage or in front of the curtain.)

WATSON: *(To audience.)* Well, that's how it started. Monday morning. A simple missing person's case. Of course, there was a missing house, too. But that was all. Not so much as an iota of evidence to suggest foul play...certainly nothing to indicate the possibility of homicide.

(Blackout.)

SCENE 5

(AT RISE: Holmes's apartment. Holmes is sitting at his desk DSR. Watson is standing upstage of the desk. Becky Berkshire is sitting in front of the desk.)

HOLMES: (To Becky.) You say, madam, your name is Berkshire?

BECKY: That's right, inspector. Rebecca Berkshire. My friends call me "Becky."

HOLMES: Then you're related to a Mrs. Beulah Berkshire.

BECKY: Distantly. I think she's a fourth cousin, twice removed...or something like that.

HOLMES: Twice removed? Would you be kind enough to explain that?

BECKY: I'm not sure I can. It's what they always say in murder-mysteries.

WATSON: I see. So when's the last time you saw Chester White?

BECKY: Saturday night. We went swimming.

WATSON: At one of the ponds, I presume, just outside of town?

HOLMES: (To Becky.) The one they call Grand Wallow?

BECKY: That's the place.

WATSON: Isn't it rather muddy there?

BECKY: We both like mud baths, I guess. Then, too, it's quiet...secluded...rather romantic.

HOLMES: I see. And how long did you swim?

BECKY: Until about 10:30. We stopped for a sundae. Then he took me straight home.

WATSON: Is that the last time you saw him?

BECKY: Yes.

WATSON: Do you know, Miss Berkshire, what time that was?

BECKY: I looked at the clock when I got in. It was exactly 11:30.

WATSON: Had you ever been to Mr. White's house?

BECKY: Yes, many times.

HOLMES: Where exactly did you say he lived?

BECKY: In a little straw bungalow over on Hampshire Avenue...2112 Hampshire, I believe.

HOLMES: While you were swimming with him, did anything strange occur?

BECKY: I didn't see anything strange, but Chester said he thought he heard a noise in the woods, like a branch breaking.

WATSON: Anything else, my dear?

BECKY: I didn't notice anything, but Chester said he sensed we were being followed as we walked home. When he kissed me goodnight, he told me to be sure and lock my doors and windows.

HOLMES: Did he seem afraid?

BECKY: Only for me. I don't think Chester was ever afraid for himself.

WATSON: Why not?

BECKY: Chester was a real hunk. He went 235. And when he got mad, he could be very aggressive. One night, two or three weeks ago, some wolf whistled at me and Chester didn't like it.

WATSON: What, if anything, did he do?

BECKY: He told Mr. Lupus to get lost. But the wolf got smart with him. Chester lowered his head and charged. He buried him. I don't think old Loopy ever knew what hit him.

HOLMES: Did Mr. White have any other enemies?

BECKY: Not that I know of. He was a really sweet guy...until you get him riled up.

WATSON: Do you, perchance, know Mr. Lupus's first name?

BECKY: Yes. It's Harry. He was a year or so ahead of me in school.

HOLMES: Is there anything else you can tell us, Miss Berkshire?

BECKY: I don't think so.

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WATSON: Have you discussed what you've told us with
Chester's mother, Mrs. Berkshire?

BECKY: No, I came straight here.

HOLMES: Did you know Chester's father?

BECKY: I never met him.

HOLMES: May I suggest that you and Mrs. Berkshire get
together and compare notes? Call us straight up, please, if
you come up with any more details.

BECKY: I'll go right over. *(Exits.)*

HOLMES: What do you think, Watson?

WATSON: I think it's obvious that we'd better pay Mr. Harry
Lupus a little social call.

(They exit. Blackout.)

SCENE 6

(AT RISE: *Harry Lupus's office. Holmes and Watson are just outside the door. Harry Lupus is dressed like an important businessman. He is wearing a suit, a tie, a shirt with French cuffs and eye-popping cufflinks. Lupus opens the door.*)

HOLMES: Mr. Harry Lupus, I presume?

LUPUS: Yes. Can I help you?

HOLMES: Good of you to see us, Mr. Lupus.

LUPUS: You have the better of me.

HOLMES: I'm Sherlock Holmes. This is my assistant Dr. Watson. We were wondering if you might be so kind as to allow us to have a word or two with you.

HARRY: Certainly. It's a great honor to meet you. You must be the most famous detective in the whole world. What can I do for you?

(*Holmes and Watson enter the home.*)

HOLMES: (*Noticing Harry's cufflinks.*) Those are very elegant cufflinks.

HARRY: They were my dad's. But I presume you didn't come here to discuss cufflinks.

HOLMES: Actually, I'm always eager to discuss cufflinks. I collect them. It's a hobby.

HARRY: Mine's chasing good-looking women.

HOLMES: May I take a closer look? (*Lupus extends his arm. Holmes inspects the cufflinks.*) It's rather amazing what you can tell about man from the cufflinks he wears.

HARRY: Really, Mr. Holmes? What can you tell about me?

HOLMES: I believe I can say without question that you had tomato soup for lunch.

WATSON: Come, come, Holmes. Surely you're pulling our leg.

HOLMES: On the contrary, my dear Watson.

HARRY: I did have tomato soup. However, did you know?

WATSON: The man's uncanny, Lupus. Simply uncanny.

Yes, Holmes, however did you know?

HOLMES: There's a rather substantial reddish-orange stain on his cuff. Not the color of blood, and still moist. Close observation coupled with adductive reasoning leads me to conclude that the most likely cause is tomato soup. The cufflinks, had nothing to do with it other than affording me an opportunity for close observation.

HARRY: I'd show you another gorgeous pair, Holmes, but I misplaced one. If you or the Doctor there come across a lone cufflink, think of me.

HOLMES: You may rely on us.

(Pause.)

HARRY: Mr. Holmes, I'm a busy guy. Can you please get to the point?

HOLMES: Certainly. We're conducting a missing-person investigation.

WATSON: *(To Harry.)* We were rather wondering if you knew a gentleman named Chester White?

HARRY: Esther White? I knew a blond by that name about ten years ago. Why?

HOLMES: Not Esther, sir. *Chester.*

(Wiley enters.)

WILEY: Don't say anything, Harry.

HOLMES: Who, may I ask, are you?

WILEY: The name is Fox, Mr. Holmes. My friends call me "Wiley." I'm Harry's friend and attorney, and I'm advising my client against saying anything to you. I presume you have heard of the right against self-incrimination?

HOLMES: Is that what you desire to do, Mr. Lupus?

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HARRY: Sorry, Holmes. I always follow my attorney's advice.

WATSON: Would you mind if we poked about the premises a bit?

HARRY: *(To Wiley.)* What do you say, counselor?

WILEY: *(To Holmes.)* Do you have a search warrant?

HOLMES: I'm afraid, Mr. Fox, that we do not.

WILEY: Then I'm afraid you will have to snoop elsewhere.
Right, Harry?

HARRY: Right, counselor.

WILEY: *(To Holmes and Watson.)* It was nice meeting the two of you. Please be sure to shut the door on your way out.

(Holmes and Watson exit. Blackout.)

SCENE 7

(AT RISE: Spotlight on Watson, who is below the stage or in front of the curtain.)

WATSON: *(To audience.)* The refusal of Harry Lupus to be of any help suggested to both Holmes and myself that perhaps the gentleman had something to hide. Holmes decided that I had better go back to White's place and canvas the entire neighborhood. Once again, I'm afraid, I came up empty. To sum it up, we haven't got a great deal. Mr. White's mother last saw him at 5:30 on Friday. The following evening, he went for a swim at the Wallow with Becky Berkshire. They were together until he dropped her off at her place at 11:30 p.m. He gave her a kiss goodnight and that's when he disappeared. We've ascertained that he's a gentleman who the women liked. His lady friend states that he's a capital chap, "until you rile him." And the only person that we know of who got him riled up was Harry Lupus. But when we approached Lupus for a little help, old Lupus exercised his right against self-incrimination on the advice of counsel. Both Holmes and I, of course, feel that Harry Lupus has something to hide. What do all of you think? Is this just a missing-persons case...or is it something more? *(Wait for audience response, "It's something more.")* Of course, I agree with you. But what? *(Wait for audience response, "murder.")* Did I hear someone say, "Murder"? *(If no one replies, Watson says.)* Which one of you out there said "murder"? Very well, if there was a murder, who did it, and how? *(Someone in the audience says "The wolf huffed and puffed and blew down the straw house and ate Chester." If no one says that, Watson pretends he heard someone say it.)* Did I just hear someone out there say Harry Lupus huffed and puffed and blew Mr. White's house down and then ate him?

WATSON: Holmes, old man, come here a minute, please.

(Holmes enters.)

HOLMES: What can I do for you, Watson?

WATSON: Listen to this one, Holmes. *(Excited.)* This person here... *(Points to audience member.)* ...has just suggested we have a murder on our hands. And do you wish to hear the theory?

HOLMES: Well, I'm afraid we'd better. We're rather clearly not doing very well on our own...

WATSON: Listen to this, Holmes. *(Barely able to contain himself.)* Harry Lupus huffed and puffed and blew White's house down and then ate him.

HOLMES: That's the most absurd thing I've ever heard.

WATSON: That, I'm afraid, is putting it kindly.

HOLMES: It's inconceivable, as a fact of physical science, that anybody could blow hard enough to blow a house away...even a straw one!

WATSON: *(To audience member.)* That is the most ludicrous theory I've ever heard.

HOLMES: Furthermore, my good friend, it suggests that Mr. Lupus is a cannibal! *(Sally Superglu enters.)* Ah, Ms. Superglu. I appreciate Inspector Lestrade making your services at the crime lab available to me.

SALLY: Mr. Holmes. I personally went, as you requested, to 2112 Hampshire, and I think we've got something interesting for you.

HOLMES: What exactly do you have?

SALLY: A footprint. I found it in the mud over at White's lot.

WATSON: Do you think that it's significant?

SALLY: Becky Berkshire tells me the mud is near where the back door was.

HOLMES: Human?

SALLY: No. Canine.

WATSON: Canine, you say?

SALLY: Like, in dog. I made a plaster cast. I'll know more after I get a look at it under the microscope in the lab.

HOLMES: Anything else?

SALLY: Nothing terribly significant. You, of course, know that Mr. Lupus is in the restaurant business.

WATSON: Yes. He runs a place called Boars-R-Us!

SALLY: Right. He specializes in ribs. Barbecued ribs.

WATSON: Come to think of it, I've seen his truck.

HOLMES: Truck, Watson? What truck is that?

SALLY: He's got a panel truck.

WATSON: It has "Boars-R-Us" written on its side panels in large block letters. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 8

(AT RISE: Holmes's apartment. Holmes is sitting behind his desk. Watson is standing off in the corner. Knock at the door.)

WATSON: (*Calls.*) The door's unlocked. Do come in.

(*Wiley and Harry enter.*)

HOLMES: Thank you for responding to my invitation for tea, Lupus.

WILEY: Please dispense with the civilities, Mr. Holmes. Do you have any warrants?

HOLMES: Regrettably, Fox, no. At present, all we have is a missing person. We were hoping your client might help us find him.

WILEY: And who is missing now?

WATSON: As we told you before, some chap by the name of White. Chester White.

WILEY: What's that got to do with my client?

WATSON: We hear your client had an altercation with Mr. White a couple of weeks ago.

WILEY: I believe you're referring to the night your Mr. White assaulted my client?

HOLMES: We were hoping to have a word with your client about the details of that incident.

WILEY: In light of the prejudice in the neighborhood against anyone named Lupus, I am instructing my client to take the Fifth.

HOLMES: Is that what you intend to do, Mr. Lupus?

HARRY: On advice of my attorney, I ain't talking.

WILEY: To be perfectly frank, Holmes, my client and his family are rather tired of the profiling that goes on in this town.

HOLMES: I don't quite follow, my good fellow.

WILEY: I'll spell it out for you. Any time someone by the name of Berkshire has a problem, it's blamed on somebody named Lupus. Unless I have your assurance that this profiling will stop, I intend to stop it...to sue.

HARRY: I hope we have made our intentions clear.

WATSON: Very clear, old fellow. Very clear.

WILEY: Come on, Harry. Let's blow this hotdog stand. Good day.

(Wiley and Harry exit.)

WATSON: I'm afraid that we're not doing too well. Are we?

(Holmes's desk phone rings.)

HOLMES: *(Into phone.)* Holmes, here...Who?...Thank you, Mrs. Hudson. Send her up immediately. *(Hangs up phone.)*

HOLMES: *(To Watson.)* Becky Berkshire's here.

(Becky enters.)

BECKY: Hello, Mr. Holmes, Dr. Watson. I just remembered something strange, which I think might be important.

WATSON: Whatever do you mean?

BECKY: After we got done swimming Saturday night, as we started to walk back to my place, a big truck went by us real slow.

HOLMES: Well, Watson, perhaps our luck is changing. *(To Becky.)* Can you describe it?

BECKY: Yes. It was an all-white Boars-R-Us truck. *(Blackout.)*

SCENE 9

(AT RISE: Spotlight on Holmes. Spotlight on Watson. Both stand below the stage or are in front of the curtain.)

WATSON: (To audience.) We've come to apologize to you. It now appears we behaved precipitously.

HOLMES: (To audience.) We're really quite ashamed. It appears we were too quick in shooting down the "huff and puff" theory.

WATSON: (To audience.) My 5-year-old niece tells me she read about a case that happened a few years ago. A serial killer huffed and puffed and blew two houses down.

HOLMES: (To audience.) And, if the witnesses are to be believed, ate the two homeowners.

WATSON: The question is...where do we go from here? We've discussed going to a judge for a search warrant to search the Boars-R-Us truck.

HOLMES: (To audience.) You see, we need a search warrant because we don't think there's a chance in the world that Lupus will give us his consent to search...not with his attorney hanging around.

WATSON: (To audience.) But at present, we fear we would be unable to establish probable cause.

HOLMES: (To audience.) The fact is...you must have enough evidence to establish probable cause...

WATSON: (To audience.) Otherwise the judge has no basis to issue the warrant.

HOLMES: (To audience.) Our problem is this: We've now established the exact date of the altercation between White and Lupus. It occurred exactly two weeks ago Friday. Additionally, we know that both White and his house have disappeared without a trace. And, finally, we know Becky remembers seeing the Boars-R-Us truck on her way home. That's it. What should we do? (Somebody in the audience says "What about the footprint?" If nobody does, Watson says "What

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about the footprint?") Ms. Superglu tells us it appears to have been made by a dog. (*Cell phone rings. Into phone.*) Holmes, here...What?...You don't say. (*Hangs up. To audience.*) We beg your pardon, ladies and gentlemen. It is a matter of some urgency that Watson and I get to a television set.

WATSON: Television set, you say?

HOLMES: Yes. It's Greta von Cistern. She's interviewing Beulah Berkshire. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 10

(AT RISE: Vacant lot. Greta von Cistern has a microphone and is interviewing Beulah Berkshire.)

GRETA: So, then, you believe that the great Sherlock Holmes bungled the investigation.

BEULAH: Certainly. I don't see where he's done anything. My son is missing and nobody's been arrested.

GRETA: Why do you suppose that is?

BEULAH: The Lupus family is a large, powerful force in this town. Mr. Holmes simply doesn't have the guts to take them on.

GRETA: So you think your son is the victim of foul play?

BEULAH: Of course I do. Chester would never run off without telling his dear, sweet, white-haired mother.

GRETA: So what exactly do you believe happened?

BEULAH: I obviously think my son has been kidnapped. I also think his house has been kidnapped. And I think you will find his body in a freezer at Mr. Lupus's restaurant.

GRETA: Then you think your son has been murdered?

BEULAH: You bet I do. Otherwise I would have heard from him by now.

GRETA: Who do you suspect killed your son?

BEULAH: I know who killed my son. His footprint was found by the back door of my son's home, or maybe I should say his *ex-home*.

GRETA: So what do you think Mr. Holmes and the police should do?

BEULAH: I don't think Sherlock Holmes is capable of doing anything. I think the police should dispense with the services of Mr. Holmes and immediately arrest Mr. Harry Lupus and hold him in jail until he makes a full confession, and I think they should search his restaurant and truck in an effort to locate my son.

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GRETA: *(To audience, concerned look.)* Here we have a distressed mother's distraught assessment of how an incompetent and perhaps corrupt "consulting detective" has mishandled her son's murder case. *(Big smile, cheerful.)* And now for a brief commercial break. *(Blackout.)*

SCENE 11

(AT RISE: *Holmes's apartment, Friday morning. There is a knock on the door. Sally enters.*)

SALLY: Mr. Holmes, I think I've got a couple of things for you.

HOLMES: Capital, Ms. Superglu. And what exactly do you have?

SALLY: That print I found...I've had a chance to make some measurements and to compare it against some known standards.

HOLMES: And?

SALLY: The print was definitely made by a member of the species *canis lupus*.

HOLMES: A wolf.

SALLY: Uncanny! However did you know?

HOLMES: Excuse me, that's what Watson always says.

SALLY: And perhaps even a big, bad wolf!

HOLMES: But how can you be sure?

SALLY: It's pretty straightforward, Mr. Holmes. Wolf tracks are generally larger than dog tracks...usually 3½ to 4 inches wide by 4 to 5 inches long.

HOLMES: How do you conclusively rule out a large dog...a giant poodle or something?

SALLY: A wolf has a distinct claw mark, as does our print.

HOLMES: Quite so. Am I correct in concluding that you found just one single paw print?

SALLY: "One single" is redundant, but, yes. Just one. Of course, it would be nice to have a few more, but one is sufficient for our purposes.

HOLMES: Perhaps. But there is a distinct advantage in having more.

SALLY: Are you referring to the fact that wolves typically track in almost a straight line? Dogs more often than not meander back and forth.

HOLMES: Quite so, Ms. Superglu. I thought I was the only living human who had deduced that fact. Are there any preliminary signs that point to Harry Lupus?

SALLY: I'm not willing to go that far. It's just one possibility at this point.

HOLMES: So where do you suggest we go from here?

SALLY: I got a tip about an hour ago. Have you ever met an individual called Larry "The Loup"?

HOLMES: I don't think so. Given my incomparable intellect, I'm quite certain I'd remember if I had.

SALLY: "The Loup" is a small-time chiseler. He gives me tips from time to time for small considerations.

HOLMES: I see. Of course, I'll reimburse you.

SALLY: He says we need to check out a guy named Louie Lobo.

HOLMES: *(To himself.)* More alliteration. *(To Sally.)* Who's Louie Lobo?

SALLY: He runs a meat-packing business over on West Wolfie Street.

HOLMES: If he's an honest businessman, why do we have to check him out?

SALLY: "The Loup" says he's been advertising *killer specials*. Ribs and roasts.

(Holmes's desk phone rings.)

HOLMES: *(Into phone.)* Holmes, here...What?...Are you serious, Mrs. Hudson?...Well, by all means, send her in. *(Hangs up.)*

SALLY: What's up?

HOLMES: There's a woman at the front desk. She claims her neighbor's house has disappeared.

SALLY: I'm out of here. I got other work to do!

(Holmes dials his desk phone.)

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HOLMES: (*Into phone.*) Watson, would you be good enough to join me?...Right away. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 12

(AT RISE: Holmes's apartment, a few minutes later. Holmes is sitting in at his desk. There is a knock at the door.)

HOLMES: (Calls.) Do come in, madam. (Rosemary Razorback enters.) How may I be of assistance?

ROSEMARY: You said, "Come on in, madam." However did you know that there was a woman at the door?

HOLMES: Elementary, my good woman. Your knock consisted of two distinct elements. First, that of knuckles rapping on my door, and, second, the sound of a smaller harder object rather like that of a diamond ring. As only women wear engagement rings, I naturally concluded that the duality of sound was created either by an engaged or married woman.

ROSEMARY: Remarkable!

HOLMES: What can I do for you, madam?

ROSEMARY: There's been a burglary.

HOLMES: At your place, madam?

ROSEMARY: No. Next door. My neighbor's house has disappeared.

HOLMES: Are you saying that the whole house disappeared?

ROSEMARY: The whole house!

HOLMES: Are you quite certain?

ROSEMARY: Of course, I'm sure. Do I look blind?

(Watson enters.)

WATSON: I didn't realize you had a visitor, Holmes.

HOLMES: Your entrance is propitiously timed, Watson. This lady says her neighbor's house has disappeared.

WATSON: Like, vanished?

ROSEMARY: Just, like, vanished. Gone!

HOLMES: Do have a seat, madam. (Rosemary sits.) When did you last see it, madam?

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ROSEMARY: Yesterday. Thursday. When I let the dog out at 10:30 last night.

WATSON: And when did you first notice that it was gone?

ROSEMARY: When I went out this morning to get the paper for my husband. I looked across the street and—poof!—there was a vacant lot where Mr. Yorkshire's place had been.

HOLMES: What's your address, ma'am?

ROSEMARY: 324 Potbelly Place. It's a nice, quiet neighborhood.

(Frantic, Beulah barges in.)

BEULAH: Mr. Holmes...

HOLMES: Yes, Mrs. Berkshire.

BEULAH: It's happened again!

WATSON: What's happened again, my dear Mrs. Berkshire?

BEULAH: My son is missing again. So is his house.

HOLMES: Chester and his house have disappeared again?

WATSON: *(To Beulah.)* How can he have disappeared again?

HOLMES: *(To Beulah.)* Why didn't you tell us he had returned?

BEULAH: Not Chester. He's still gone. Yorky!

ROSEMARY: Yorky Yorkshire?

BEULAH: Yes, Yorky Yorkshire.

ROSEMARY: You know him, too?

BEULAH: Of course, I know him. I'm his mother. His father was my second husband.

HOLMES: How long's he been gone, ma'am?

BEULAH: He passed away about five years ago.

HOLMES: Not your second husband, ma'am, your son...Yorky.

BEULAH: I don't know for sure.

ROSEMARY: *(To Holmes.)* Overnight.

WATSON: When did you last see him?

ROSEMARY: Late yesterday afternoon.

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BEULAH: *(To Watson.)* On Thursday, just before my television appearance with that lovely Greta von Cistern lady.

HOLMES: *(Surprised.)* Lovely, you say?

BEULAH: Did you see us? Did I look good?

WATSON: Indeed, you did, madam.

ROSEMARY: *(To Holmes and Watson.)* She sure didn't make the two of you look any too good.

HOLMES: *(Annoyed. To Beulah.)* Could we get back to our discussion of when you last saw your son?

BEULAH: That's what I'm trying to tell you. Yoriky came over to calm me down.

ROSEMARY: What a nice boy.

BEULAH: He's such a dear.

ROSEMARY: Mr. Holmes, we can't be talking about the same person. The Yoriky Yorkshire I know is certainly not a deer.

BEULAH: I meant... *(Spells.)* ...d-e-a-r, dear.

HOLMES: And that was the last time you saw Yoriky?

BEULAH: He left right after the interview. He said he was meeting a friend for a Coke. I think it was a girl. I haven't seen him since.

ROSEMARY: *(To Holmes.)* The Yoriky I know is very popular with the girls.

WATSON: Did Mr. Yorkshire also own his own house?

BEULAH: He built a little place over at 327 Potbelly Place. A lovely frame residence...with morning glories twining around the door.

ROSEMARY: *(To Watson.)* Actually, it was made of sticks, but he had added cedar siding to make it look like frame.

BEULAH: *(To Watson.)* It was pretty shabby when he moved in, but he fixed it up real nice and made it look very pretty.

WATSON: So when exactly did you first become aware he had disappeared, madam?

BEULAH: When I tried to call him this morning. His phone was disconnected.

HOLMES: And, then, I presume, you stopped by his place?

BEULAH: Yes.

WATSON: When precisely did you stop, madam?

BEULAH: Ten minutes ago. Right before I came here.

HOLMES: And you say the house was gone?

BEULAH: Yes.

HOLMES: Was there any rubble scattered around?

BEULAH: Not a bit. The whole house was gone. The only thing left was the vacant lot.

WATSON: Incredible! How could a frame house just disappear?!

ROSEMARY: Actually, it was made of sticks, but it had cedar siding to make it look like frame.

WATSON: Holmes, I don't like the sound of this. Houses just don't disappear.

HOLMES: Certainly not two of them.

ROSEMARY: It sounds to me like you're dealing with a serial house-napper.

BEULAH: *(To Holmes.)* I think you are dealing with a serial kidnapper.

HOLMES: Are you able to describe your son Yorky, madam?

BEULAH: Certainly. He's incredibly handsome...

[END OF FREEVIEW]