

The Adventure of the Lost Dutchman - LosD
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The Return of Solar Pons

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The Case

John Paul Renfield, a distraught clerk for the mysterious Counsellors Extraordinary Ltd, comes to Praed St. A visitor to his office has been found dead there the next day and Renfield is the primary suspect. The dead man had spelled out on the floor in blood part of a message. Pons deduces that the man was trying to write "Lost Dutchman," a legendary gold mine in the United States. The story of the mine is at the crux of the killing.

Quotes

- *The lust for gold curses its possessors.*
- *Ah, Parker, you're wasting your talents writing up these tame little adventures of mine. You should be in the department of sinister Orientals and the cosh-and-bag'em school."*
- *Parker: I fear I cannot follow you, Pons.*
Pons: It is not the first time.

Comments

- Renfield rushes into Pons' lodgings, begging Pons to help him avoid being arrested by the police for murder. This certainly reminds the reader of the opening of *The Adventure of the Norwood Builder*. In that case, John Hector McFarlane bursts into Sherlock Holmes' Baker Street lodgings, begging Holmes to help him, as he is wanted by the police for murder.
- Renfield is assigned busy work as a clerk for Counsellors Extraordinary Ltd. His first day, he is told to go through the city directory and make a list of all the stores that handle paper supplies.

There are two similar occurrences in the Sherlock Holmes Canon. In *The Adventure of the Red Headed League*, Jabez Wilson secures a position in the League. He is then employed to come to the offices daily and copy down entries from The Encyclopedia Britannica.

In *The Adventure of the StockBroker's Clerk*, Pycroft Hall is hired by the Franco-Midland Hardware Company and is set to work in their Birmingham headquarters. His task: to go through the Paris, France city directory and mark off all the hardware sellers and furniture shops.

However, in the cases of Wilson and Hall, the purpose of the ruse was to remove the two men from their normal locales. The planned criminal activities could not take place without the absence of both men from the scenes. This is not so

regarding Renfield. The villain in *The Lost Dutchman* is attempting to lure someone into the offices, which requires an employee there to make it appear to be a real company. Renfield's presence elsewhere would not upset plans. It is someone's presence at the Counsellors Extraordinary Ltd. that is required. If not Renfield, someone else would have done just as well.

- The Lost Dutchman is the most famous legendary mine in the world. It is believed to be somewhere in the Superstition Mountains of Arizona. One legend is that the Dutchman is just one of several mines that were mined by the Peralta family, from Sonora, Mexico. The story is that a Peralta expedition was massacred by Apache Indians. The Peraltas later covered the Dutchman with a rockslide to hide it, and the Apaches then removed further traces.

In 1954, some stone maps were found next to an Arizona highway that kept interest in the mine high. Treasure seekers to this day are searching for The Lost Dutchman, and many mine hunters have either disappeared or been found dead under various circumstances.