

The Adventure of the Shaplow Millions – Shapl

The Chronicles of Solar Pons, 1973

Date - Copper/Summer, 1924
Patrick/Summer 1927

The Case

The rather overbearing Mrs. Rosie Shaplow comes to Praed Street. Her husband of three years, Major Arthur Shaplow, has a suit before the courts for seven million pounds. Three days prior, he informed Rosie that he was through with her and handed her an executed divorce decree. She wants her share of the pending lawsuit and does not intend to take things lying down. She hires Pons to follow Shaplow to find out what he's doing and who he's seeing (she suspects there's another woman). Pons goes under cover with Parker to make contact with Shaplow and find out what is going on; especially regarding this large lawsuit.

Quotes

- *Parker: It is common, disgusting – nothing but possible adultery and a lust for money.*
- *There are times, Parker, when you have marked relapses from the level of ratiocination to which you have progressed!*

Comments

- Parker is literally aghast that Pons takes on this case, both before and after the meeting with Rosie Shaplow. He says Pons will demean himself taking on a case unworthy of a man of his calibre. He calls it a “sordid divorce proceeding” and refers to her as a “vulgar woman” who can “barely write a coherent letter.” His description of her when she arrives at Praed Street includes, “reeked of perfume” and dressed in the height of expensive bad taste.” After she leaves, Parker tells Pons that he is shocked that the detective is going to involve himself in a “vulgar divorce action.” Rosie Shaplow is a memorable client in large part because of Parker's disapproval of her and her case.
- Henry Marten was an ally of Oliver Cromwell and assisted Cromwell in bringing Charles I to trial and was one of the 59 Commissioners who signed the king's death warrant. After the Restoration and Charles II's rise to the throne, Marten was imprisoned (some regicides were executed). He spent the final twelve years of his life jailed in Chepstow Castle, which could be seen from the Beaufort Arms, where Pons and Parker stayed. He was buried there after death.
- The center of this story is a lawsuit for seven million pounds that Major Shaplow has filed against the National Shires Bank. In today's society, when someone sues because the cable went out during their favorite reality tv show, this makes for an interesting variation on the normal type of crime that Pons investigates. Of course,

as soon as Major Shaplow brings Colonel Barr as an investor, fraud immediately comes to mind.

- Derleth occasionally shows flashes of humor that are lacking in Doyle's tales. At the climactic scene, Parker unwittingly gets run over by the villain, trying to make his escape. That scene is brought to a close with, 'By the time I recovered my breath, both Jamison and Major Shaplow were gone.'
- Parker comments that he thinks that Pons has mentioned Colonel Septimus Barr before, and Pons agrees that is possibly so. I do not recall a mention of Barr elsewhere in the Canon. What could the story behind him be?
- Rosie Shaplow believes that her husband has found some other woman and that is why he has divorced her. But we never do find out why he decided to end their marriage after three years. It's simply not addressed.