

3 The missing beryls

8 Suddenly I heard footsteps in the dressing-room. I got up and looked round the door.

“Arthur!” I shouted, “you thief!”

Arthur was standing there holding the coronet. He was doing something with it. When I shouted he dropped the coronet and turned white. I picked it up and looked at it. One of the gold corners, with three of the beryls, was missing.

“You villain!” I shouted. “Where are the three beryls? Are you a thief? You were trying to break off and run away!”

“No,” he said, “That’s not true. Stop insulting me.”

“I’m going to call the police!” I said angrily.

Now everyone was awake, for my voice was loud and angry. Mary ran into my room, saw the coronet then screamed and fainted. Lucy went to call the police.

“Are they going to arrest me?” Arthur asked.

“Yes! Of course! The Berwick coronet belongs to England.”

“But first I must leave the house for five minutes,” said Arthur.

“To run away?” I said, “but tell us where the missing beryls are!” I said.

“No,” he answered, “I can’t.”

When the police came they searched Arthur and his room and all the house for the three beryls. But they didn’t find them. They took Arthur to prison, and I came here to ask for your help. The police don’t know what happened. I’m offering a reward of £1,000 for the beryls. Help me! I lost both my son and the jewels in one night!

He took his money in his hands.

GLOSSARY

- **arrest:** take to the police station
- **fainted:** was weak and fell to the ground
- **footsteps:** sound of feet
- **insulting:** saying bad things to
- **reward:** money for helping to find something
- **thief:** person who steals things
- **villain:** terrible person



Sherlock Holmes sat silently, then he said:

‘Are you sure Arthur is guilty?’

‘Yes, Mr Holmes. I saw him with the coronet in his hands.’

‘That is not proof. Was the coronet broken?’

‘Yes, it was.’

‘Perhaps Arthur was trying to fix it. What do the police say about the beryls?’

‘They are still looking for them.’

‘Did they look outside?’

‘Yes, they searched the garden.’

‘Now, sir,’ said Holmes. ‘You think Arthur got up, went to your dressing-room, opened your desk, took out the Beryl Coronet, broke off a small piece, went to another place and hid three beryls out of the thirty-nine, but nobody can find them. He then returned and put the other thirty-six beryls into the dressing-room, taking a big risk. I ask you, is this possible?’

‘But if Arthur is innocent, why doesn’t he say?’ said the banker.

‘Let’s find out,’ replied Holmes. ‘We must go to your house in Streatham.’

INNOCENT OR GUILTY?

What do you think? Is Arthur innocent?

Can you think of reasons why he is innocent and of reasons why he is guilty?

GLOSSARY

- **banker:** person with important position in a bank
- **fix:** repair; make it better
- **guilty:** when someone does something wrong
- **innocent:** not done anything wrong
- **proof:** information that shows something is true
- **taking...risk:** doing something possibly dangerous

4 Miss Mary's story

9 I also thought Arthur was guilty. But I knew Holmes wasn't happy with the banker's version of the events. He didn't speak while we were on the train, but sat with his hat over his eyes, thinking deeply. After a short journey we arrived at Fairbank, the banker's house.

Fairbank was a large square house standing back from the road. In front there were two large iron gates. On the right were some bushes, which led into a path between two hedges from the road to the kitchen door. On the left was a lane to the stables. It wasn't part of the garden. It was a public path. Holmes walked slowly round the house, and behind into the lane. Mr Holder and I went into the dining-room and waited for Holmes. Suddenly a tall young lady came in. She was slim, with dark hair and eyes, and a white face. Her eyes were red from crying. She said:

'Is Arthur free now, Uncle?'

'No, Mary, the police must question him first.'

'But I'm sure Arthur's innocent.'

'Well, I saw him with the coronet in his hand.'

'He was probably just holding it. Please believe me.'

'Mr Sherlock Holmes is investigating. He's in the lane now.'

Mary looked surprised. 'What can he find there?'

Then Holmes walked into the room. 'I hope, sir, you can prove my cousin is innocent,' he said.

'I hope so too,' replied Holmes. 'I believe you are Miss Mary. Can I ask you some questions?'

'Please do, sir, if it can help Arthur.'

- **bushes:** low trees
- **hedges:** tall group of bushes
- **iron gates:** type of metal wall protecting house from the street
- **lane:** small road

- **path:** small simple road
- **prove:** show to everyone
- **slim:** thin
- **stables:** place for horses
- **standing back:** not directly on

‘Did you hear a noise last night?’

‘No, just my uncle’s voice.’

‘Did you shut all the windows the night before?’

‘Yes.’

‘Were they all shut this morning?’

‘Yes.’

‘You told your uncle last night that Lucy, the maid, went out to see her admirer.’

‘Yes, perhaps she heard my uncle talking about the coronet.’

‘So you think she told her admirer, and they planned to steal the coronet?’

‘But, Mr Holmes,’ cried the banker, ‘I saw Arthur with the coronet in his hands!’

‘Wait, Mr Holder. Now Mary, did Lucy come back by the kitchen door?’

‘Yes. I saw the man, too, in the garden.’

‘Do you know him?’

‘Oh, yes! He’s our greengrocer, Francis Prosper.’

‘Does Francis Prosper have a wooden leg?’

Suddenly the young girl looked afraid. ‘Why, you’re like a magician,’ she said. ‘How do you know?’ She smiled, but there was no smile on Holmes’s face.

‘I want to look at the downstairs windows,’ he said.

Holmes walked quietly from one window to the other. He stopped at the large window in the hall which looked onto the lane. He opened it and looked carefully at the windowsill with his magnifying glass.

‘Now we can go upstairs,’ he said.

GLOSSARY

- **greengrocer:** man who sells fruit and vegetables
- **looked onto:** was beside
- **magician:** person who can do magic things
- **magnifying glass:** object used to make things seem bigger
- **windowsill:** bottom inside part of window (see picture)

