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*Dramatic Publishing*

A Full-length Comedy

# **The Very Great Grandson of Sherlock Holmes**

By

Bill Majeski



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(THE VERY GREAT GRANDSON OF SHERLOCK HOLMES)

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THE VERY GREAT GRANDSON  
OF SHERLOCK HOLMES  
*A Full-Length Play*  
For Four Men and Seven Women

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C H A R A C T E R S

- SHERWOOD HOLMES . . . . . *grandson of the great  
Sherlock Holmes*
- DOCTOR WATSON . . . . . *Sherwood's trusted aide  
and assistant*
- JASON McTORG . . . . . *butler at the Creastley mansion*
- TRIXIE BENDER . . . . . *upstairs maid*
- LAVERNE LOVEJOY . . . . . *downstairs maid*
- MEG BAKER . . . . . *scullery maid*
- DINAH CHEERY . . . . . *cook*
- HILARY CREAMSTLEY . . . . . *sister of Harris Creamstley*
- AMANDA WEEDLER . . . . . *Harris Creamstley's aunt*
- HARRIS CREAMSTLEY . . . . . *master of the Creamstley  
mansion*
- HELGA . . . . . *in trouble, seeking Sherwood's help*
- RADIO ANNOUNCER . . . . . *voice only*

TIME:        *The present.*

PLACE:      *Sherwood Holmes' office and the Harris  
Creamstley mansion.*

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NOTES ON CHARACTERS  
AND COSTUMES

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**SHERWOOD HOLMES:** Urbane, knowledgeable, often brilliant, sometimes pompous and vain. When occasion demands, he wears a cape and deer-stalker hat.

**DOCTOR WATSON:** Sherwood's trusted aide and assistant.

**JASON McTORG:** Sneaky and sarcastic, this ex-con does his butting at the Creastley mansion. He wears black suit and tie.

**TRIXIE BENDER:** Pretty, vivacious, has show business aspirations. She wears an attractive maid outfit.

**LAVERNE LOVEJOY:** A pretty girl, flirtatious and saucy. She wears a pert maid outfit.

**MEG BAKER:** Pretty, serious-minded.

**DINAH CHEERY:** A hypochondriac of the first water. She cooks, but not all that well. She is tough, feisty, middle-aged. She wears an apron over a house dress.

**HILARY CREAMSTLEY:** Sister of the master of the house, Harris Creamstley. She is cool, regal, austere. She is primly dressed.

**AMANDA WEEDLER:** Crusty, cranky and wheelchair-ridden.

**HARRIS CREAMSTLEY:** Master of the Creamstley mansion, for a while, at least. He is old, stately, dignified, except that he has the habit of sucking his thumb.

**HELGA:** Shapely female in trouble seeking Sherwood Holmes' help. She is blonde, attractive, wears close-fitting blouse and skirt and high heels.

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## PROPERTIES

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### GENERAL:

Holmes' office: Desk, two chairs, dictating machine on desk.

Creastley mansion: Chairs, sofa, lamp tables and lamps, desk and chair, radio, piano, painting on wall, light switch on wall. Box of candy on one table, vase of flowers on another table, bowl of fruit (including apples and grapes) on a third table.

Act Two: Large magnifying glass and photos on desk; pointer on desk; Holmes' cape near desk.

### PERSONAL:

HELGA: Revolver.

HOLMES: Pipe, note in pocket, wristwatch.

WATSON: Pads of paper, pens, a business card, several photographs, crutches.

BUTLER: Pen in pocket, magazine, blackboard and chalk, rope.

TRIXIE BENDER: Water and bandages.

LAVERNE LOVEJOY: Glass of water, feather duster, wheelchair.

MEG BAKER: Note in purse, handkerchief, gun.

AMANDA WEEDLER: Lasso.

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# ACT ONE

## Scene One

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SCENE: Sherwood Holmes' office. In front of curtain, R. There is a desk and chair, and an extra chair. A dictating machine sits on the desk and a yellowish fantasy light shines on the area to denote a dream or imagined sequence. HOLMES is seated behind his desk and begins narrating, tough guy style, a la Bogart, Marlowe, etc.)

HOLMES. It was morning. Cold, bleak, sullen, angry. I just got word on the Gruesome George trial. Gruesome was a madman who killed an entire symphony orchestra because they refused to complete the "Unfinished Symphony." I solved the case when the police asked for help. The judge threw the book at George -- thirty days in the electric chair.

(HELGA, an attractive girl in a blouse and skirt and high heels, comes into the office as HOLMES continues narrating.)

HOLMES. I was about to close my files on the case when she wriggled into my office. She was a beauty. She had a shape that would make a lunatic turn to reason. Her high heels beat a velvet tattoo on the soft pile rug. Somebody had poured her into those clothes and forgot to stop. Her lips looked like a landing field

for eager kisses. Her blonde hair was spun gold swept back like a stack of Kansas wheat gleaming in the noonday sun. Her voice oozed into the room like marshmallow syrup, caressing my ears and making me think of good times past.

HELGA. My name's Helga.

HOLMES (still tough private eye). That's what they all say.

HELGA. I had to see you.

HOLMES. I've heard that song before. What's your game, sister?

HELGA. You're the one who sent Mean Mannie McGrew to prison?

HOLMES. Why not? Killing a plumber out of season isn't exactly fun and games time.

HELGA. But Mannie didn't mean it. He's innocent. He was cleaning his bow and arrow and it went off accidentally.

HOLMES. Fourteen times?

HELGA (sobbing). You must get him out of prison. I'm alone. Lonely. Grief-stricken.

HOLMES (narrating). I had to give this chick the old heave-ho. Her tears were staining my desk blotter. (To HELGA.) Beat it, lady. Mannie is a no-good clown. (HELGA backs away from Holmes' desk.)

HELGA. You'll pay for this, Holmes!

HOLMES (narrating). I noticed she was wearing a pastel blouse with a sweetheart neckline and puffed sleeves, tapering gently to a .38 caliber revolver she held in her hand. (Change speech as desired, to describe costume worn by actress.)

HELGA (aiming gun). I'm gonna ventilate you, gumshoe.

HOLMES (rising). Put down the gun, Helga.

HELGA. Stand back. (HOLMES comes around desk and moves toward HELGA, who retreats.)

HOLMES. You won't shoot.



HELGA. I'm warning you, shamus.

HOLMES. Give me the gun, Helga. You won't pull that trigger. You can't pull that trigger. You're a fine, cultured woman of breeding. You have the aura of gentility, the zest for love and life. You're not homicidal. You're not psychologically equipped to shoot a fellow human. Give me the gun, Helga. (She bursts into tears, hands him the gun and falls into his arms, her body racking with sobs.)

HELGA. You're wonderful. Just wonderful.

HOLMES. Not so's you'd notice it, baby.

(Fantasy light fades and Holmes' office goes dark.

HELGA exits and HOLMES sits behind desk again.

DOCTOR WATSON comes out from L. He's shaking his head as he walks C to address audience. Lights come up in that area.)

WATSON. No. No way. Never happened. Hey, look, Sherwood Holmes is a nice guy, but sometimes he spends a little too much time in Dream City. I mean, he's a private eye just like his grandfather, Sherlock Holmes -- you may have heard of him -- but for the most part, his heart really isn't in it. I'll let you in on something, the big reason he's a private eye is that it was stipulated in old Sherlock's will that all his descendants must remain in the field and fight against crime if they are to continue receiving a sizable trust fund. Young Sherwood is the last male in the line so he pulls down a pretty good bundle every year.

You see, Sherlock, the master crime fighter of them all, figured his genes and genius would be passed down generation to generation in the

continuing battle against Moriarty. Moriarty, the epitome of evil, the heinous high priest of villainy, was synonymous with evil in Sherlock's book. And so, Sherwood Holmes is a private eye, though you might say he is a reluctant Hawkshaw. I must say Sherwood gets involved when the family tradition is on the line. He's handled some pretty rough cases. He possesses keen insight, great academic knowledge and has amazing powers of deduction at times. The hard part is getting him excited enough about something to take on a case. Frankly, for the most part, I must say Sherwood is sort of a social lion, gadabout and well-known figure in certain snobbish circles.

Oh, my name is Watson. Doctor Watson. Ah, some of you remember the name. And you're right. I am the grandson of Sherlock Holmes' trusted friend, the Doctor Watson. I'm a doctor, too, but I've taken a year-long sabbatical to do my thesis on forensic medicine and criminology. I've been working with private investigator Sherwood Holmes for six months now and find it fascinating. I guess you'd say history is repeating itself -- a Holmes and a Watson joined in battle in the never-ending fight against crime. And who knows? Out there, somewhere in the festering, broiling underworld, there may be another descendant eager and ready to perpetuate dastardly deeds; a descendant of the original monarch of menace -- the infamous, vile, notorious criminal -- Moriarty.

(Lights go up on Holmes' office. HOLMES, seated at desk, a large pipe in his mouth, summons WATSON in a rather haughty manner, which is

apparent in his bearing and gestures.)

HOLMES. Would you please come in, Watson. I'd like your valued opinion on these letters I must dictate. (WATSON nods an "excuse me" to the audience and walks into the office. He sits down and watches as HOLMES begins talking into a dictating machine.) Dear Inmate Number 3747462: In answer to your query -- no, there is no truth to the rumor that Sing Sing Prison will become co-educational. Sorry. Sincerely, Sherwood Holmes.

To Abner Glessen: Have no fear, you may walk the streets in peace again. I have apprehended the man who assaulted you last Friday after the bachelor party. He is safely out of circulation in the New York Home for Unwed Muggers. Yours against crime . . .

Dear Mayor: Rest assured I stand behind you one hundred per cent in your current hassle with the police. I think it's ridiculous for the police to demand to be bussed to crimes outside their neighborhoods. Yours for law and order . . . (HOLMES stands up, paces.) Watson, do you remember Jonathan Booderry?

WATSON. The mad axeman? The man who killed dozens of innocent insurance salesmen as a protest against the system? The man you helped put behind bars?

HOLMES. The man police helped me put behind bars. He just escaped from San Quentin.

WATSON. I didn't read about it.

HOLMES. Warden Woofer called me this morning. He'd like me to write an open letter in the newspapers, hoping it would convince Jonathan

to return to prison.

WATSON. A kind word from you would help, sir.

HOLMES (dictating). Dear Jonathan: Consider this a personal request from me -- put down your axe and return to prison. San Quentin really isn't a bad place. I mean, anytime you take three thousand murderers, embezzlers, con men, stranglers, rowdies and yes, even mad axemen -- no offense -- you're bound to have a few bad apples. The warden tells me your room is the same way you left it -- in a shambles. The bed is cut in half, the walls have been kicked in, but if a man can't work off some steam in prison then, by heaven, where can he do so? Surely you miss San Quentin's fine food. Remember the evening you ate seven entire meals, nineteen paper napkins, a tin cup and part of Ed McMartin's right elbow? Well, let me tell you, I heard that "Lefty" McMartin bears no grudge. They all want you back. Why not throw away your axe and return to San Quentin -- your home away from home. Your erstwhile adversary, Sherwood Holmes.

WATSON. Very understanding, compassionate and enlightening.

HOLMES (suddenly, angrily). I hope they nail that rotten bum to the wall! (Catching himself.) Now, I'm on my way to the tulip festival in Scarsdale. Be back about six-ish. Ta-ta . . .

(Just as HOLMES starts out a pretty girl comes in. This is MEG BAKER.)

MEG. Mr. Holmes?

HOLMES (dignified, rather haughty). That is correct.

MEG. I'm so glad I caught you. I need your help badly.

HOLMES. Many people do.

MEG. My employer is being threatened. . . .

HOLMES. Not unusual these days. What is your name?

MEG. Meg Baker. And I'm . . .

HOLMES (raising hand, cutting her off). Say the name again . . . slowly. (She opens her purse and takes out note.)

MEG. Meg Baker . . . and I . . . this note . . .

HOLMES. You are from a small town in the southeastern corner of Connecticut.

MEG (stunned). Why . . . that's amazing . . . yes . . . Stonington.

HOLMES. You have dyed your hair within the past week . . .

MEG (stunned again). Saturday night!

HOLMES. You shop at the Willoughby Department Store.

MEG. Yes, I do.

HOLMES. You are near-sighted.

MEG. Yes . . . I wear glasses while driving. . . .

HOLMES. You work . . . as a scullery maid.

MEG. At the Creastley mansion . . . but that's uncanny.

WATSON. Amazing. How did you deduce that, sir?

HOLMES. Her faintly southeastern twang alludes to her place of origin. The melange of color in her hair roots fairly shouts of hair coloration. Her perfume is a private brand produced in southern France and marketed only at Willoughby's. Her imperceptible change of focus when she looked up from her purse to me indicates near-sightedness, and the water wrinkles on her hands together with the soap pad in her purse states she does kitchen work.

MEG. That's unbelievable.

WATSON. Fantastic, sir.

HOLMES. Elementary, my dear Watson.

MEG. You're all that they said you are.

HOLMES. Often more.

MEG. Then you'll help me?

HOLMES. I don't recall making a commitment to you, young lady.

MEG. But it's important. My employer, Harris Creastley . . .

HOLMES. Ah . . . Harris Creastley, the Davis Cup and national singles Ana-Wordies champion?

MEG. You've heard of him?

HOLMES. Naturally.

WATSON. What's Ana-Wordies?

HOLMES. Ana-Wordies, my dear Watson, is a game requiring utmost skill in forming and completing words under fierce competitive conditions. It is similar to crossword puzzles, Scrabble and anagrams, only far more complicated, of course. To be successful in first-class competition, a participant must be a veritable lexicographer, possess etymological expertise and have attained the status of master philologist. In addition, he must have a vast knowledge of history, art, music, world affairs, along with various and sundry arcane subjects, at his fingertips.

MEG. Do you play?

HOLMES. I excel.

MEG. Then you'll be interested in helping a fellow Ana-Wordies champion?

HOLMES. Let me see that note. (MEG hands it to him.)

MEG. It's a threat.

HOLMES (after reading). The words "death . . . kill . . . murder . . . not much longer to live . . ." usually constitute a threat.

MEG. Mr. Creastley is a fine gentleman. He's

been so nice to me.

HOLMES. Ana-Wordies players often show admirable qualities of tenderness and understanding in direct contrast to the fiery displays of raw temperament during competition.

MEG. Somebody wants to kill him. Won't you protect him?

HOLMES. I'm so busy. My tulip jamboree this afternoon. Tomorrow I judge the map-folding contest at Dunstants Travel Agency. Then the wine-tasting at Fablance's. . . . I must judge the Miss Husky Lady contest . . . and the autograph party for my book -- "For He's a Jolly Good Felon" . . .

MEG. Please . . . a life is at stake. . . . I told everyone the famous Mr. Holmes would take the case. . . .

HOLMES. I just don't see how.

WATSON. If you'll excuse me, sir . . . (WATSON calls HOLMES aside and speaks to him.) If I may, this is a fine opportunity to get the name Holmes in front of the public again. Harris Creastley is a well-known figure. The papers will pick it up. Besides, prevention of a serious crime is another stomp on the face of the evil Moriarty. Your grandfather would want it that way. Also, you've been out of action for a time and that trust fund committee's meeting is coming up . . .

HOLMES. You're right, Watson. Miss Baker, I'll take the case.

MEG. Oh, thank you. About money . . .

HOLMES. Mr. Watson will bill you later. I shall be at the mansion later today.

MEG. Thank you, thank you, Mr. Holmes. (MEG exits.)

HOLMES. Well, Watson, lay out my hat, cape and

cane. Nefarious schemes involving mayhem, murder, threats or bad language must be thwarted. Come, Watson, a-thwarting we will go.

WATSON (enthusiastically). Yessir! (They head off as lights go dark and then out.)

LIGHTS OUT