

The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire



06

An interesting note

Holmes was sitting in his armchair reading a note that the post had brought to him. He looked at me in disbelief, read it again and then he threw it to me. I caught it before it landed in my tea.

‘I think that we have already reached our limits in weird, mysterious, modern and ancient, but this note took it to another level. Tell me what you think, my dear Watson.’

I found a weak ray of sunshine coming through the window where I put the note to the light to see it better and I started to read:

*46, OLD JEWRY,
Nov. 19th.
Re Vampires*

SIR:

Our client, Mr. Robert Ferguson, of Ferguson and Muirhead, asked us to speak with him about a delicate case concerning vampires. As we have never dealt with anything mysterious, and our speciality is more technical and practical, we recommended Mr. Ferguson to contact you instead. We have not forgotten your success in the case of Matilda Briggs. Please expect his letter very soon.

*We are, sir,
Faithfully yours,
MORRISON, MORRISON, AND DODD.*

Dobrodružstvo sussexského upíra

Pozoruhodný list

Holmes sedel vo svojom kresle a čítal správu, ktorú mu poštár odovzdal. Pozrel sa na mňa s nedôverou, znova si odkaz prečítal a potom ho hodil po mne. Zachytil som ho práve včas. Skoro mi totiž pristál v čaji.

„Myslím, že už sme zažili všetko, čo sa dá nazvať zvláštnym, tajuplným, moderným alebo starodávnym, ale tento odkaz to všetko posúva na inú úroveň. Čo na to hovoríš, drahý Watson?“

Do jedného zo slabých slnečných lúčov, ktoré do izby oknom dopadali, som umiestnil odkaz, aby som naň lepšie videl, a začal som čítať:

OLD JEWRY 46

19. november

Od.: Upíri

Pane,

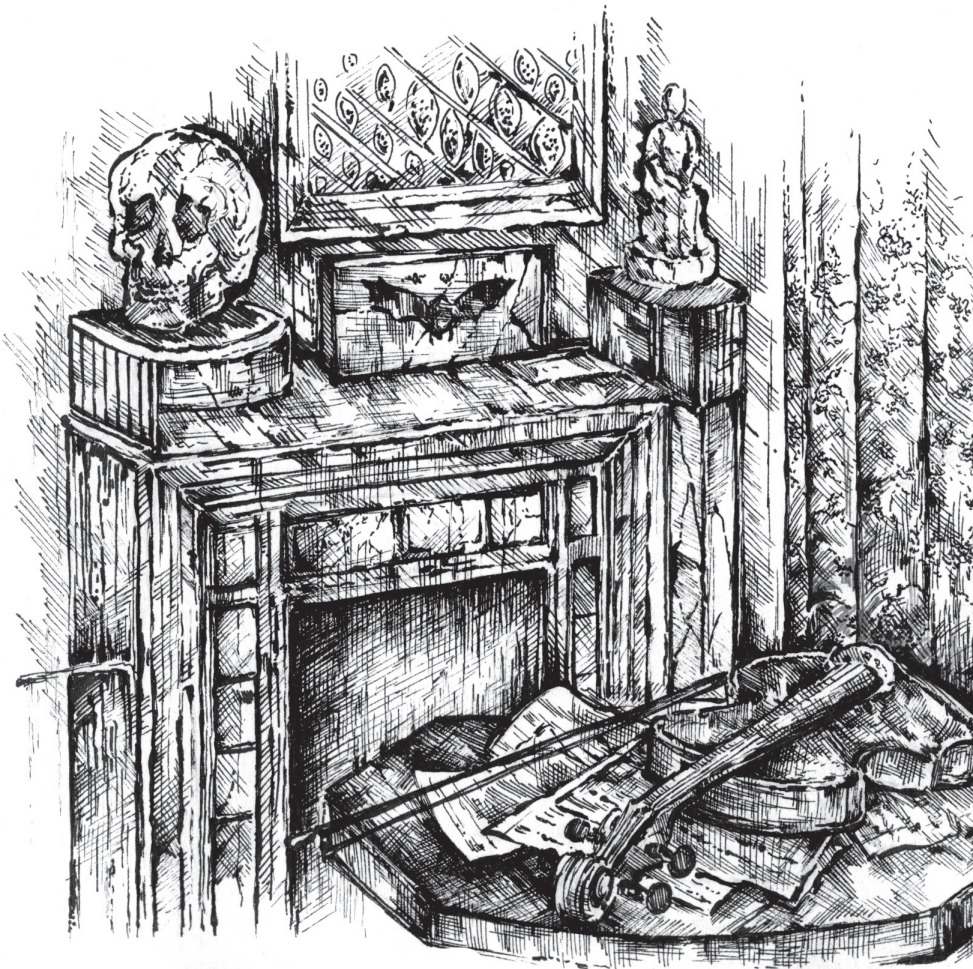
jeden z našich klientov, pán Robert Ferguson zo spoločnosti Ferguson & Muirhead, nás požiadal, aby sme s ním prebrali veľmi delikátnu záležitosť, ktorá sa týka upírov. A pretože sme sa nikdy tajuplnými zákazkami nezaoberali, riešime skôr praktické a technické veci, odporučili sme pánovi Fergusonovi, aby radšej kontaktoval Vás. Máme ešte stále v pamäti Váš úspech v kauze Matildy Briggsovej. Prosíme, očakávajte od neho veľmi skoro správu.

S úctou

MORRISON, MORRISON A DODD

‘So Watson, what do we know about vampires? Or walking dead bodies? Are we in Transylvania?’

‘But it does not have to be a dead man, it could be a living person that has this habit. It might be connected to the legend where old people had to suck the blood of the young in order to stay young and beautiful.’



„Tak, drahý Watson, čo vieme o upíroch? Alebo o chodiacich mŕtvolách? Sme snáď v Transylvánii?“

„Nemusí predsa ísť o mŕtveho muža. Môže to byť aj živý človek, ktorý má takúto závislosť. Možno je to nejako spojené s legendou o starcoch, ktorí sali krv mladých ľudí, aby sa sami stali mladými a krásnymi.“



‘Yes, I have heard the story. But do you think we should seriously pay attention to this strange case? I am afraid that I won’t be able to take Mr. Fergusson seriously.’

I noticed another letter lying on the table.

‘This might be a letter from him? Maybe he will explain to us what exactly is going on.’

Holmes started reading the letter and the smile from his face disappeared. Instead he had the look of a person who was very interested in finding out more.

‘Dear Watson, do you know where Lamberley is?’

‘It is in Sussex, not very far from here. I actually know the place. It is full of old houses named after men who built them centuries ago.’

‘Interesting. You were right, this is the letter from Mr. Fergusson and according to him you two know each other.’

‘Really?’

Holmes nodded and handed me the letter.

‘Read it for yourself.’

DEAR MR. HOLMES,

My lawyers recommended you as the absolute professional and a very gifted detective. This is a very delicate situation. I am writing on behalf of my friend, whose story you are going to read now.

This gentleman married a lady from Peru five years ago, the daughter of his business partner.

The lady was very beautiful, but because she was foreign, her exotic looks caused difficulties in the society around the couple. My friend realized that although he loved her their marriage was a mistake. He felt that she was too complicated for him to understand.

„Áno, tento príbeh som už počul. Ale myslíš, že by sme sa naozaj mali vážne zaoberať týmto prípadom? Obávam sa, že nebudem schopný brať pána Fergusona vážne.“

Všimol som si ďalší list, ktorý ležal na stole.

„Možno je tento od neho. Možno nám lepšie vysvetlí, o čo ide.“

Holmes sa pustil do čítania listu a pobavený úsmev z jeho tváre zmizol. Nahradila ho tvár človeka, ktorého zaujal obsah.

„Drahý Watson, vieš, kde leží Lamberley?“

„To je v Sussexe, celkom blízko odtiaľto. Poznám to tam. Sú tam staré domy, ktoré nesú mená tých, ktorí ich pred stáročiami postavili.“

„Zaujímavé. O tom liste si mal pravdu. A podľa pána Fergusona sa vy dvaja poznáte.“

„Naozaj?“

Holmes pokýval hlavou a list mi podal.

„Však si to prečítaj sám.“

VÁŽENÝ PÁN HOLMES,

moji právnici mi Vás odporučili ako veľkého profesionála a talentovaného detektíva. Ide totiž o veľmi delikátnu záležitosť. Píšem z poverenia svojho priateľa, ktorého príbeh Vám teraz prezradím.

Tento muž sa pred piatimi rokmi oženil so ženou z Peru, ktorá bola dcérou jeho obchodného partnera.

Tá žena bola veľmi krásna, a pretože bola cudzinka, jej exotický vzhľad ležal v žalúdku mnohým ľuďom, ktorí sa s manželským párom stýkali. Môj priateľ si uvedomil, že hoci ju veľmi miloval, ich manželstvo bolo asi chybou. Mal pocit, že kvôli rozdielnemu pôvodu si veľmi nerozumejú.

The lady was very sweet and loving but she slowly began to show another scary side of her character.

The gentleman had been married twice and had one son by his first wife. The boy was now fifteen, a charming young man, who was seriously injured in an accident when he was a child and was now dealing with his injuries.

The wife was twice caught showing signs of violent behaviour. One time she hit him with a stick but that was not as bad as what she did to her one-year-old son. The nanny found her as she was biting his neck. The nanny was shocked and angry and wanted to talk to the lady's husband, but the lady asked her not to and gave her five pounds for her silence. But the nanny started to keep an eye on her and watched the little baby boy even more closely. She even checked on him at night and saw his mother waiting in the shadows. So the nanny could not wait any longer and went to the lady's husband and told him everything.

He did not want to believe it at first – he even got angry at her for lying and not properly respecting the lady of the house, but while they were talking they heard a loud cry from the child's bedroom. They ran upstairs only to see his wife rising from a kneeling position and the child with blood on his neck and on the sheets. When she turned her face towards him, she had blood around her lips. It was obvious that she had drunk his blood.

Now she is locked up in her room. When she was asked, she refused to answer, and my friend had a nervous breakdown. He knows a little about vampirism but needs to know more.

Will you please see me to discuss the situation more? Let me know and I will be at your rooms at ten o'clock.

Yours faithfully, ROBERT FERGUSON.

P.S. I know your friend Watson. We both played Rugby.

Žena bola veľmi milá a očarujúca, ale postupne sa začala ukazovať aj desivá stránka jej charakteru.

Môj priateľ bol ženatý dvakrát a z prvého manželstva mal syna. Chlapec mal teraz pätnásť rokov. Je to šarmantný mladý muž, ktorý sa ale snaží vyrovať s následkami nehody, ktorá sa mu stala, keď bol ešte malý.

Manželka môjho priateľa bola dvakrát pristihnutá pri násilnom správaní. Raz udrela palicou staršieho syna, ale to nebolo nič strašné oproti tomu, čoho sa dopustila na svojom ročnom synovi. Opatrovateľka ju prekvapila, keď malého hrýzla do krku. Tak ju to šokovalo, že chcela o všetkom povedať manželovi svojej panej, ale tá ju presvedčila, nech to nerobí, a dala jej päť libier za mlčanie. Opatrovateľka ale od tej doby chlapčeka takmer nespustila z očí. Dokonca ho aj z dialky kontrolovala, skrytá v tme, a sledovala, čo s ním jeho matka robí. Nemohla už ale dlhšie čakať, a tak nakoniec za pánom domu išla a všetko mu povedala.

Najskôr jej ale nechcel vôbec veriť, dokonca ju obvinil z klamstiev a z nedostatku rešpektu k svojej panej, ale počas rozhovoru počuli hlasný plač z detskej izby. Ponáhľali sa hore, kde uvideli pánovu manželku, ktorá sa práve zdvíhala od postielky, a dieťa s krvavými stopami na krku a na obliečkach. Okolo pier sa jej leskli kvapky krvi. Bolo jasné, že ju pila.

Teraz je zamknutá vo svojej izbe. Na otázky odmieta odpovedať a môj priateľ sa nervovo zrútil. O vampirizme toho veľa nevie a rád by sa dozvedel viac. Mohli by sme sa stretnúť a prebrať túto situáciu viac do hĺbky? Ak súhlasíte, dajte mi vedieť a ja sa u Vás zastavím o desiatej.

S úctou, ROBERT FERGUSON

P.S.: S vaším priateľom Watsonom sa poznáme. Obaja sme hrali rugby.

‘Of course, I remember him,’ I said as I was putting down the letter. ‘Big Bob Ferguson, the best athlete Richmond ever had. He was a really kind person. It doesn’t surprise me that he wants to help his friend.’

Holmes looked at me, shook his head and smiled.

‘You always surprise me, Watson. Why don’t we help your friend... Send him a note that we are going to expect him tomorrow morning.’



Ferguson’s visit

07 At ten o’clock in the morning Ferguson came into our room. I remembered him as a tall and well-built man but what I saw was a shadow of that great athlete. It was very sad. I could see that the pain had created deep lines on his forehead.

‘Hullo, Watson!’ he said with a deep voice. ‘I see that time was not too friendly to either of us.’ Then he turned to Holmes:

‘Mr. Holmes, by the words in your telegram I think that there is no need for me to pretend that I am here for my friend.’

‘It will be easier,’ replied Holmes.

‘I know and you are right, but I hope you can understand that I had good reasons. When I married her, I promised to care for her and protect her. I could not go straight to the police ... I was hoping that you might have had some experience with a similar case.’

‘Mr. Ferguson, please, take a seat. I am sure we can find a solution to your case. I will now give you some questions and I want you to answer as clearly as you can.’

‘Ask me whatever you want.’

‘Is your wife still near the children?’

‘I want you to know that she is a very loving woman. I haven’t met a more loving person than she is. After the incident she locked herself in a room and refused to talk to me. She only opens her door for her old servant Dolores, who brings her food.’

„No iste! Pamätám si ho,“ povedal som a odložil list. „Veľký Bob Ferguson, najlepší športovec, aký v Richmonde kedy bol. Mal dobré srdce, tak ma ani neprekvapuje, že chce pomôcť svojmu priateľovi.“

Holmes na mňa pozrel, pokýval hlavou a usmial sa.

„Ty ma neprestaneš prekvapovať, Watson. Tak mu teda pomôžeme... Pošli mu správu, že ho zajtra ráno očakávame.“

Fergusonova návšteva

Presne o desiatej dopoludnia vošiel Ferguson do izby. Pamätám si ho ako vysokého a dobre stavaného muža, ale to, čo som videl, bol len tieň toho skvelého športovca. Bolo to smutné. Jeho čelo zdobili hlboké vrásky od bolesti.

„Nazdar, Watson!“ povedal hlbokým hlasom. „Vidím, že ani k jednému z nás nebol čas príliš priateľský.“ Potom sa otočil k Holmesovi.

„Pán Holmes, podľa toho, čo bolo v telegrame, asi nemusím predstierať, že som tu kvôli svojmu priateľovi.“

„Áno, to bude lepšie.“

„Iste, a máte pravdu. Ale veľmi by som si priaľ, aby ste pochopili, že som mal svoje dôvody. Keď som si ju bral, sľúbil som, že sa o ňu budem starať a chrániť ju. Nemohol som teda ísť hneď na políciu. Dúfal som, že napríklad máte skúsenosti s podobným prípadom. „

„Pán Ferguson, posaďte sa. Som si istý, že váš prípad určite vyriešime. Teraz vám ale položí pár otázok a bol by som rád, keby ste odpovedali čo najotvorenejšie.“

„Opýtajte sa ma, na čo chcete.“

„Pohybuje sa teraz vaša manželka stále v okolí detí?“

„Chcel by som len zdôrazniť, že je to veľmi milujúci človek. Myslím, že som nikoho takého ešte nestretol. Po tom poslednom incidente sa zamkla v izbe a odmieta sa so mnou zhovárať. Dvere odomyká, iba keď jej stará slúžka Dolores prináša jedlo.“