



# Library podcast

## Thrilling Tales, A Storytime for Grownups presents: “Stir Outside the Café Royal” by Clarence Rook and “The Stolen Cigar Case” by Bret Harte

[00:00:05] Welcome to the Seattle Public Library’s podcasts of author readings and library events, a series of readings, performances, lectures and discussions. Library podcasts are brought to you by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation. To learn more about our programs and podcasts, visit our web site at [www.spl.org](http://www.spl.org). To learn how you can help the Library Foundation, support the Seattle Public Library, go to [Foundation.SPL.org](http://Foundation.SPL.org).

[00:00:40] Welcome to Thrilling Tales. Thrilling Tales happens on the first and third Monday of every month. My name is David. I'm a librarian here. I work in the Reader's Services Department on the third floor. We've got all kinds of great books up there. Come up and see us sometime. We'd love to fix you up with some. We do all sorts of stories and thrilling tales. Last time we had a very contemporary story about a really creepy killer who went on fishing trips and coming up, we've got some interesting, weird stories in contemporary hardboiled suspense and whatnot. Today, however, we traveling back in time to the Victorian era when the name of the game was a detective named Sherlock Holmes. Today is not a Sherlock Holmes story, but rather two of the responses to Sherlock Holmes. The craze that was Sherlock Holmes got a lot of people into the mystery writing business and everybody was looking for a fresh angle and kind of a new spin on it. And our first story, the very short story, kind of an appetizer, was one such story that appeared in *The Strand magazine* where Sherlock Holmes was published in September of 1898. It had a very fresh spin on the detective story of the day because the detective was a woman,

[00:02:01] and an American at that. This story is called the “*Stir Outside the Cafe Royal: A Story of Miss Van Snoop, Detective*” by Clarence Rook. Colonel Maturin was one of the aristocrats of crime, at least Maturin was the name under which he had accomplished a daring bank robbery in Detroit, which had involved the violent death of the manager.

[00:02:31] Though it was generally believed to the police that the Rossiter, who was at the bottom of some long firm frauds in Melbourne, was none other than Maturin under another name, and that the designer and Chief Gainer in a sensational murder case in the Midlands was the same mysterious and ubiquitous personage. But Maturin had for some years successfully eluded pursuit. Indeed, it was generally known that he was the most desperate among criminals and was determined never to be

taken alive. Moreover, as he invariably worked through subordinates who knew nothing of his whereabouts and were scarcely acquainted with his appearance, the police had but a slender clue to his identity. As a matter of fact, only two people beyond his immediate associates in crime could have sworn to Maturin if they'd met him face to face. One of them was the Detroit bank manager whom he had shot with his own hand before the eyes of his fiancée.

[00:03:34] It was through the other that Maturin was arrested, extradited to the states, and finally made to atone for his life of crime. It all happened in a distressingly commonplace way so far as the average spectator was concerned. But the story which I've pieced together from the details supplied, firstly by a certain detective sergeant whom I met in a tavern hard by Westminster, and secondly by a certain young woman named Miss Van Snoop, has an element of romance, if you look below the surface. It was about half past one o'clock on a bright, pleasant day that a young lady was driving down Regent Street in a Hansom cab which she had picked up outside her boarding house near Portland Road Station. She told the cab man to drive slowly as she was nervous, behind a horse. And so she had leisure to scan with the curiosity of a stranger, the strolling crowd that at nearly all hours of the day, throngs Regent Street. It was a sunny morning and everybody looked cheerful. Ladies were shopping or looking in at the shop windows. Men about town were collecting an appetite for lunch. Flower girls were selling nice violets, sweet violets, penny a bunch. And the girl in the cab leaned one arm on the apron and regarded the scene with alert attention.

[00:04:53] She was not exactly pretty, for the symmetry of her features was discounted by a certain hardness in the set of the mouth. But her hair so dark as to be almost black, and her eyes of grayish blue set her beyond comparison with the commonplace. Just outside the Cafe Royal, there was a slight stir and a temporary block in the foot traffic. A Brown cab was setting down. Behind it was a Victoria. And behind that, a Hansom. And as the girl glanced round the heads of the pair in the Brown, she saw several men standing on the steps. Leaning back suddenly, she opened the trap door of the roof. "Stop here," she said. "I've changed my mind." The driver drew up by the curb and the girl skipped out. "You shan't lose by the change," she said, handing him half a crown. There was a tinge of an American accent in the voice and the cabman pocketed the half crown with thanks and smiled. Meanwhile, the girl walked slowly back towards the Café Royal and with a quick glance at the men who were standing there, entered.

[00:06:02] One of the two men raised their eyebrows, but the girl was quite unconscious and went on her way to the luncheon room. "American, you bet," said one of the loungers. "They'll go anywhere, do anything." Just in front of her, she entered was a tall, clean shaven man, faultlessly dressed in glossy silk hat and frock coat with a flower in his buttonhole. He looked around for a moment in a search for a convenient table. As he hesitated, the girl hesitated. But when the waiter waved him to a small table laid for two, the girl immediately sat down behind him at the next table. "Excuse me, madam," said the waiter, "this table is set for four. Would you mind?" "I guess," said the girl, "I'll stay where I am." And the look in her eyes, as well as a certain sensation in the waiter's palm, ensured her against further disturbance. The restaurant was full of people lunching singly or in twos and threes, even large parties. And many curious glances were directed to the girl who sat at the table alone and pursued her way calmly through the menu. The girl appeared to notice no one. When her eyes were

off her plate, they were fixed straight ahead on the back of the man who had entered in front of her. The man who had drunk a half bottle of champagne with his lunch ordered a liqueur to accompany his coffee.

[00:07:25] The girl who had drunk an aerated water, leaned back in her chair and wrinkled her brows. They were very straight brows. They seemed to meet over her nose when she wrinkled them in perplexity. Then she called a waiter. "Bring me a sheet of notepaper, please," she said, "and my bill." The waiter laid the sheet of paper before her and the girl proceeded. After a few moments' thought, to write a few lines in pencil upon it. When this was done, she folded the sheet carefully and laid it in her purse. Then, having paid her bill, she returned her purse to her dress pocket and waited patiently. In a few minutes, the clean shaven man at the next table settled his bill and made preparations for departure. The girl at the same time drew on her gloves, keeping her eyes immovably upon her neighbor's back. As a man rose to depart and passed the table at which the girl had been sitting, the girl was looking into the mirror upon the wall, padding her hair. Then she turned and followed the man out of the restaurant, while appear at an adjacent table remarked to one another, that it was a rather curious coincidence for a man and a woman to enter and leave at the same moment when they had no apparent connection.

[00:08:42] But what happened outside was even more curious. The man halted for a moment upon the steps of the entrance. The porter, who was in conversation with a policeman turned, whistle in hand. "Hansom, sir?" he said. "Yes," said the clean shaven man. The porter was raising his whistle to his lips when he noticed the girl behind. "Do you wish for a cab, madam?" he asked, and blew upon his whistle. As he turned again for an answer he plainly saw the girl, who was standing close behind the clean shaven man, slip her hand into his coat and snatched from his hip pocket, something which she quickly transferred to her own. "Well," the clean shaven man swinging round and feeling in his pocket said, "Well, if you missed anything, sir," said the porter, standing full in front of the girl to bar her exit. "My cigarette case is gone," said the man, looking from one side to another. "What's this?" said the policeman, stepping forward. "I saw that woman's hand in the gentlemen's pocket, plain as a pikestaff," said the porter. "Oh, that's it, is it?" said the policeman, coming close to the girl. "I thought as much." "Come now," said the clean shaven man. "I don't want to make a fuss.

[00:09:54] Just hand me back the cigarette case and we'll say no more about it." "I haven't got it!" said the girl. "How dare you! I never touched your pocket." The man's face darkened. "Oh, come now!" said the porter. "Look here. That won't do," said the policeman. "You'll have to come along with me. Better take a four-wheeler, eh sir?" For a knot of loafers, seeing something interesting in the wind had collected around the entrance. A four-wheeler was called, and the girl entered closely, followed by the policeman and the clean shaven man. "I was never so insulted in all my life," said the girl. Nevertheless, she sat back quite calmly in the cab, as though she was perfectly ready to face this or any other situation, while the policeman watched her closely to make sure that she did not dispose in any surreptitious way of the stolen article. At the police station, hard by the usual formalities were gone through, and the clean shaven man was constituted prosecutor. But the girl stoutly denied having been guilty of any offense. The inspector in charge looked doubtful. "Better search her," he said, and the girl was led off to a room for an interview with the female searcher. The moment the

door closed, the girl put her hand into her pocket, pulled out the cigarette case, and laid it upon the table.

[00:11:11] "There you are!" she said. "That will fix matters so far." The woman looked rather surprised. "Now," said the girl holding out her arms, "feel in this other pocket and find my purse." The woman picked out the purse. "Open it, and read the note on the bit of paper inside." On the sheet of paper which the waiter had given her, the girl had written these words, which the searcher read in a muttered undertone, "I am going to pick this man's pocket as the best way of getting him into a police station without violence. He is Colonel Maturin alias Rossiter alias Connell, and he is wanted in Detroit, London, New York, Melbourne and Colombo. Get four men to pin him unawares for he is armed and desperate. I am a member of the New York Detective Force, Nora van Snoop. It's all right," said Miss Vance quickly as the searcher looked up at her after reading the note. "Show that to the boss right away." The searcher opened the door after whispered consultation. The inspector appeared holding the note in his hand. "Now, then, be spry," said Miss Van Snoop. "Oh, you needn't worry. I got my credentials right here," and she dived into another pocket. "But do you know?"

[00:12:23] "Can you be sure," said the inspector, "that this is the man who shot the Detroit bank manager?" "Great heavens! Didn't I see him shoot Will Stevens with my own eyes? And didn't I take service in the police to hunt him out?"

[00:12:39] The girl stamped her foot and the inspector left. For two, three, four minutes, she stood listening intently. Then a muffled shot reached her ears. Two minutes later, the inspector returned. "I think you're right," he said. "We found enough evidence on him to identify him. But why didn't you give him in charge before to the police?" "I wanted to arrest him myself," said Miss Van Snoop. "And I have. Oh, Will! Will!" Miss Van Snoop sank into a cane bottomed chair, laid her head upon the table and cried. She had earned the luxury of hysterics. In half an hour, she left the station and proceeding to a post office, cabled her resignation to the head of the detective force in New York.

[00:13:33] That's the entire career of Mrs. Nora van Snoop detective who did what she did for love. Our second case and main story today also involves a stolen cigar case, in this case. And this was written by Bret Harte, who around the time of the popularity of Sherlock Holmes, wrote a series of stories which he called condensed novels. It was successful enough that he did two collections of them. And I've got them here, if you're interested. And they were sort of his take on the popular fiction of the day. Very few of them really read very well anymore because they're they're kind of about what was very popular at that time. But one of them has not aged at all and still works very well. And this is his take on a detective who I'm sure you'll recognize. This story is called *The Stolen Cigar Case* and it's by Bret Harte.

[00:14:32] I found Hemlock Jones and the old Brook Street lodgings, musing before the fire. With the freedom of an old friend I at once threw myself in my old familiar attitude at his feet, and gently caressed his boot. I was induced to do this for two reasons. One, that it enabled me to get a good look at his bent, concentrated face and the other that it seemed to indicate my reverence for his

superhuman insight. So absorbed was he even then in tracking some mysterious clue, that he did not seem to notice me. But therein

[00:15:12] I was wrong, as I always was, in my attempt to understand that powerful intellect. "It is raining," he said, without lifting his head. "You've been out, then?" I said quickly. "No, but I see that your umbrella is wet and that your overcoat, which you threw off upon entering, has drops of water on it." I sat aghast at his penetration. After a pause, he said carelessly, as if dismissing the subject. "Besides, I hear rain on the window. Listen."

[00:15:52] I listened. I could scarcely credit my ears, but there was the soft pattering of drops on the pane. It was evident there was no deceiving this man. "Have you been busy lately?" I asked, changing the subject. "What new problem, given up by Scotland Yard as inscrutable, has occupied your gigantic intellect?" He drew back his foot slightly and seemed to hesitate ere he returned it to its original position. Then he answered wearily. "Mere trifles, nothing to speak of. The Prince Kupoli has been here to get my advice regarding the disappearance of certain rubies from the Kremlin. The Rajah of Pootibad, after vainly beheading his entire bodyguard, has been obliged to seek my assistance to recover a jewelled sword. The Grand Duchess of Pretzel-Brauntwig is desirous of discovering where her husband was on the night of the 14th of February, and last night," he lowered his voice slightly, "a lodger in this very house, meeting me on the stairs,

[00:16:57] wanted to know why don't they answer the bell."

[00:17:02] I could not help smiling, until I saw a frown gathering on his inscrutable forehead.

[00:17:08] "Pray to remember," he said coldly, "that it was through such an apparently trivial question that I found out why Paul Ferroll killed his wife and what happened to Jones." I became dumb at once.

[00:17:23] He paused for a moment and then suddenly changed back to his usual pitiless, analytical style, he said,

[00:17:30] "When I say these are trifles, they are so in comparison to an affair that is now before me. A crime has been committed, and singularly enough, against myself. You start," he said. "You wonder who would have dared to attempt it. So did I. Nevertheless, it has been done. I have been robbed."

[00:17:52] "You robbed! You, Hemlock Jones, the Terror of Peculators" I gasped in amazement, arising and gripping the table as I faced him. "Yes. Listen, I would confessed to no other but you, who have followed my career, who know my methods. You, for whom I have partly lifted the veil that conceals my plans from ordinary humanity. You, who have for years rapturously accepted my confidences, passionately admired my inductions and inferences, placed yourself at my beck and call, become my slave, groveled at my feet. Given up your practice, except those few unremunerative and rapidly decreasing patients to whom, in moments of abstraction of my problems, you have

administered strychnine for quinine and arsenic for epsom salts. You who have sacrificed everything and everybody to me.

[00:18:46] You I made my confidant.”

[00:18:49] I arose and embraced him warmly, yet he was already so engrossed in thought that at the same moment he mechanically placed his hand upon his watch chain as if to consult the time. “Sit down,” he said.

[00:19:03] “Have a cigar?” “I’ve given up cigar smoking,” I said. “Why?” he asked.

[00:19:11] I hesitated and perhaps I colored. I had really given it up because, with my diminished practice, it was too expensive. I could only afford a pipe. “I prefer a pipe,” I said laughingly. “But tell me of this robbery. What have you lost?” He rose and planting himself before the fire with his hands under his coat tails, looked down upon me reflectively for a moment.

[00:19:35] “Do you remember the cigar case presented to me by the Turkish ambassador for discovering the missing favorite of the Grand Vizier in the 5th chorus girl at the Hilarity Theater?

[00:19:45] It was that one. It was encrusted with diamonds. I mean, the cigar case.” “And the largest one had been supplanted by paste,” I said. “Ah,” he said with a reflective smile, “you know that? You told me yourself. I remember considering it a proof of your extraordinary perception. But, by Jove, you don’t mean to say you’ve lost it?” He was silent for a moment.

[00:20:11] “No, it has been stolen. It is true. But I shall find it. And by myself alone in your profession, my dear fellow, when a member is severely ill, he does not prescribe for himself, but calls in a brother

[00:20:26] doctor, therein we differ. I shall take this matter in my own hands.”

[00:20:33] “And where could you find better?” I said enthusiastically. “I should say the cigar case is as good as recovered already.” “I shall remind you of that again,” he said lightly.

[00:20:44] “And now, to show you my confidence in your judgment. In spite of my determination to pursue this alone, I’m willing to listen to any suggestions from you.” He drew a memorandum book from his pocket and with a grave smile, took up his pencil. I could scarcely believe my senses.

[00:21:00] He, the great Hemlock Jones accepting suggestions from a humble individual like myself. I kissed his hand reverently, and I began in a joyous tone, “First I should advertise offering a reward. I should give the same information in handbills distributed in the pubs and the pastry cooks. I should next visit the different pawnbrokers. I should give notice to the police station there. I should examine the servants. I should thoroughly search the house and my own pockets. I speak relatively,” I added with a laugh, “Of course I mean your own.” He gravely made an entry of these details, “Perhaps,” I added, “you have already done this?”

[00:21:44] “Perhaps,” he returned enigmatically. “Now, my dear friend,” he continued putting the notebook in his pocket and rising,

[00:21:52] “Would you excuse me for a few moments? Make yourself perfectly at home until I return. There may be some things,” he added, with a sweep of his hand towards his heterogeneously filled shelves, “that may interest you. And while away the time there are pipes and tobacco in that corner and whiskey on the table,” and nodding to me with the same inscrutable face, he left the room. I was too well accustomed to his methods to think much of this unceremonious withdrawal, and I made no doubt that he was off to investigate some clue which had suddenly occurred to his active intelligence. Left to myself, I cast a cursory glance over his shelves. There were a number of small glass jars containing earthy substances labeled “pavement and road sweepings” from the principal thoroughfares and suburbs of London with the sub directions “for identifying foot tracks”. There were several other jars labeled “fluff from omnibus” and “road car seats”, “coconut fiber and rope strands from matings in public places”, “cigarette stumps and match ends from the floor of Palace Theatre Row A 1 to 50”. Everywhere were evidences of this wonderful man system and perspicacity. I was thus engaged when I heard the slight creaking of a door, and I looked up as a stranger entered.

[00:23:17] He was a rough looking man with a shabby overcoat. Still more disreputable muffler, rounded throat and a cap on his head. Considerably annoyed at this intrusion, I turned upon him rather sharply when, with a mumbled, growling apology for mistaking the room, he shuffled out again and closed the door. I followed him quickly to the landing and saw that he disappeared down the stairs. With my mind full of the robbery, the incident made a singular impression on me. I knew my friend’s habits of hasty absences from his room and his moments of deep inspiration. It was only too probable that with his powerful intellect and magnificent perceptive genius concentrated on one subject, he should be careless of his own belongings, and no doubt even forget to take the ordinary precaution of locking up his drawers. I tried one or two and I found I was right, although for some reason I was unable to open one to its fullest extent. The handles were sticky, as if someone had opened them with dirty fingers. Knowing Hemlock’s fastidious cleanliness, I resolved to inform him of his circumstance, but I forgot it. Alas, until, oh, but I anticipate my story.

[00:24:35] His absence was strangely prolonged. I at last seated myself by the fire and lulled by warmth and the patter of the rain on the window, I fell asleep. I may have dreamt during my sleep. I had a vague semi-consciousness as of hands being softly pressed on my pockets, no doubt induced by the story of the robbery. When I came fully to my senses, I found Hemlock Jones sitting on the other side of the hearth, his deeply concentrated, gaze fixed on the fire. “I found you so comfortably asleep that I could not bear to waken you,” he said with a smile. I rubbed my eyes. “And what news?” I asked. “How have you succeeded?” “Better than I expected,” he said. “And I think,” he added, typing his notebook, I owe much to you.”

[00:25:29] Deeply gratified I awaited more, but in vain. I ought to have remembered that in his moods, Hemlock Jones was reticence itself. I told him simply of the strange intrusion, but he only laughed.

[00:25:44] Later, when I rose to go, he looked at me playfully.

[00:25:48] “If you were a married man,” he said, “I would advise you not to go home until you had brushed your sleeve. Here are a few short brown seal skin hairs on the inner side of the forearm, just where they would have adhered to your arm if your arm had encircled a seal skin sac with some pressure.”

[00:26:11] “For once you're at fault,” I said triumphantly. “The hair is my own as you will perceive. I have just had it cut at the hairdressers and well no doubt this arm projected beyond the apron.” He frowns slightly, yet nevertheless, on my turning to go, he embraced me warmly. A rare exhibition in that man of ice.

[00:26:30] He even helped me on with my overcoat and pulled out and smoothed down the flaps of my pockets. He was particular, too, in fitting my arm in the overcoat sleeve, shaking the sleeve down from the armhole to the cuff with his deft fingers.

[00:26:46] “Come again soon,” he said. Clapping me on the back. “At any at all times,” I said enthusiastically, “I only ask ten minutes, twice a day, to eat across to my office, and at four hours of sleep at night. And the rest of my time is devoted to you always, as you know.” “It is indeed,” he said with his impenetrable smile.

[00:27:06] Nevertheless, I did not find him at home when I next called. One afternoon while nearing my own home, I met him in one of his favorite disguises: a long blue swallow tailed coat, striped cotton trousers, a large turnover collar, blacked face, and a white hat carrying a tambourine. Of course, to others, the disguise was perfect, although it was known to myself and I passed him according to our understanding, without the slightest recognition, trusting to a later explanation. At another time, as I was making a professional visit to the wife of a publican at the East End, I saw him in the disguise of a broken down artisan looking into the window of an adjacent pawn shop. I was delighted to see that he was evidently following my suggestions, and in my joy I ventured to tip him a wink. It was a abstractedly returned.

[00:28:05] Two days later, I received a note appointing a meeting at his lodgings that night. That meeting house was the one memorable occurrence of my life, and the last meeting I ever had with Hemlock Jones. I will try to set it down calmly, though my pulses still throb with a recollection of it.

[00:28:31] I found him standing before the fire with that look upon his face, which I seen only once or twice in our acquaintance. A look which I may call an absolute concatenation of inductive and deductive ratiocination, from which all that was human, tender or sympathetic was absolutely discharged. He was simply an icy algebraic symbol. Indeed, his whole being was concentrated to that extent that his clothes fitted loosely, and his head was absolutely so much reduced in size by his mental compression that his hat tipped back upon his forehead and literally hung down on his massive ears. After I'd entered, he locked the doors, fastened the windows and even placed a chair before the chimney.



[00:29:22] As I watched these significant precautions with absorbing interest, he suddenly drew a revolver and presenting it at my temple, said in low, icy tones, "Hand over that cigar case." Even in my bewilderment, my reply was truthful, spontaneous and involuntary. "I haven't got it," I said. He smiled bitterly and threw down his revolver. "I expected that reply. Then let me now confront you with something more awful, more deadly, more relentless and convincing than that mere lethal weapon. The damning, inductive and deductive proofs of your guilt." He drew from his pocket a roll of paper and notebook. "But surely," I gasped, "you are joking. You get off for a moment, believe – ""Silence! Sit down!: He roared.

[00:30:17] I obeyed.

[00:30:19] "You have condemned yourself," he went on pitilessly, "Condemned yourself on my processes, processes familiar to you, applauded by you, accepted by you for years. We will go back to the time when you first saw the cigar case. Your expressions," he said in cold, deliberate tones, consulting the paper, were 'How beautiful. I wish it were mine.'

[00:30:45] This was your first step in crime, and my first indication from I wish it were mine to I will have it mine. And the mere detail. How can I make it mine?

[00:30:56] The advance was obvious silence. But as in my methods, it was necessary that there should be an overwhelming inducement to the crime. That unholy admiration of yours for the mere trinket itself was not enough. You are a smoker of cigars." "Oh but," I burst out passionately, "I told you I'd given up smoking cigars." "Fool!" he said coldly. "This is the second time you have committed yourself. Of course you told me. What more natural than for you to blazon forth that prepared unsolicited statement to prevent accusation? Yet, as I said before, even that wretched attempt to cover up your tracks was not enough. I still had to find that overwhelming impelling motive necessary to effect a man like you. That motive I found in passion the strongest of all impulses. Love, I suppose you would call it," he added bitterly. "That night you called. You had brought the damning proofs of it on your sleeves."

[00:32:02] "But," I almost screamed. "Silence!" he thundered. "I know what you would say. You would say that even if you had embraced some young person in a sealskin sac. What had that to do with the robbery? Let me tell you then that that sealskin sac represented the quality and character of your fatal entanglement. If you were at all conversant with a lighter sporting literature, you would know that a sealskin sac indicates a love induced by sordid mercenary interests. You bartered your honor for it. That stolen cigar case was the purchaser of the sealskin sac. Without money, with decreasing practice, it was the only way you could ensure your passion being returned by that young person whom, for your sake, I have not even pursued. Silence! Having thoroughly established your motive, I now proceed to the commission of the crime itself. Ordinary people would have begun with that, with an attempt to discover the whereabouts of the missing object. These are not my methods." So overpowering was his penetration that although I knew myself innocent time, I licked my lips with avidity to hear the further details of this lucid exposition of my crime.

[00:33:18] “You committed the theft the night I showed you the cigar case, and after I had carelessly thrown it in that drawer. You were sitting in that chair, and I had reason to take something from that shelf. In that instant, you secured your booty without rising. Silence! Do you remember when I helped you on with your overcoat the other night? I was particular about fitting your arm in. While doing so, I measured your arm with a spring tape measure from the shoulder to the cuff. A later visit to your tailor confirm that measurement. It proved to be the exact distance between your chair and that drawer.”

[00:33:57] I sat stunned.

[00:34:01] “The rest are mere corroborative details. You were again tampering with the drawer when I discovered you doing so. Oh, do not start! The stranger that blundered into the room with the muffler on was myself. More, I placed a little soap on the door handles when I purposely left you alone, the soap was on your hand, when I shook it at parting. I softly felt your pockets when you were asleep. For further developments, I embraced you when you left that I might feel if you had the cigar case or any other articles hidden on your body. This confirmed to me the belief that you had already dispose of it in the manner and for the purpose I have shown you. As I still believe you capable of remorse and confession, I allowed you to see that I was on your track twice, once in the garb of an itinerant Negro minstrel. And the second time as a workman looking into a window of the pawn shop where you pledged your booty.”


[00:34:57] “But,” I burst out, “if you'd asked the pawnbroker, you would have seen how unjust – “. “Fool! he hissed, “that was one of your suggestions to search the pawn shops. Do you suppose I followed any of your suggestions, those suggestions of a thief? On the contrary, they told me what to avoid.”

[00:35:20] “And I suppose,” I said bitterly, “you have not even searched your drawer?” “No,” he said calmly. I was for the first time really vexed. I went to the nearest door and I pulled it out sharply. It stuck as it had before, leaving a part of the drawer unopened. By working it, however, I discovered that it was impeded by some obstacle that had slipped to the upper part of the drawer, and I held it firmly, fast, and inserting my hand. I pulled out the impeding object. It was the missing cigar case. I turned to him with a cry of joy. But I was appalled at his expression. A look of contempt was now added to his acute penetrating gaze.

[00:36:06] “I've been mistaken,” he said slowly.

[00:36:10] “I had not allowed for your weakness and cowardice. I thought too highly of you, even in your guilt. But I see now why you tampered with that drawer the other night by some incredible means, possibly another theft. You took the cigar case out of pawn and like a whipped hound, restored it to me in this feeble, clumsy fashion.

[00:36:30] You thought to deceive me, Hemlock Jones! More, you thought to destroy my infallibility.



[00:36:37] Go! I give you your liberty. I shall not summon the three policemen who wait in the adjoining room, but out of my sight forever!" Now, as I stood once more dazed and petrified, he took me firmly by the ear and led me into the hole, closing the door behind me. This reopened presently wide enough to permit him to thrust out my hat, overcoat, umbrella and overshoes, and then closed against me forever. I never saw him again. I'm bound to say, however, that thereafter, my business increased, I recovered much of my old practice, and a few of my patients recovered also. I became rich. I had a Brougham and a house in the West End. I often wondered, pondering on that wonderful man's penetration and insight, if, in some lapse of consciousness, I had not really stolen his cigar case!

[00:37:48] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.

