

Silver Blaze

Silver Blaze

The Facts of the Case

- The horse Silver Blaze, the favorite for a race was missing, and its trainer murdered.
- One night, as usual, the horse had been locked up in the stable.
- The trainer who lived nearby had retired for the day.
- His maid carried dinner of curried mutton to the stable, for a servant lad who slept there.
- Fitzroy Simpson, a young man looking for a tip to place his bets on the right horse, approached the stable, only to be chased away by the lad.
- On hearing the story later from the maid, the trainer was upset and went out to the stable to check on the horse.
- He never returned home.

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The Facts of the Case

- The next morning, the stable door was open, and the lad found in a drugged sleep.
- At a distance was the trainer's body, the head shattered from a blow.
- He held a small knife in one hand, and a cravat in another.
- Simpson had been seen wearing that cravat the night before.
- Suspicion naturally led to Simpson.

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Police Investigation

- Police enquiry showed that he had squandered a fortune on the turf.
- He had placed large bets against Silver Blaze.
- He was unable to explain the presence of his cravat in the hands of the murdered man.
- His clothes showed he had been out in the rain at night.
- He possessed a heavy stick, which could have dealt the blow that killed the trainer.

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The Conclusion of the Police

- The police inspector concluded that having drugged the lad's food through the stable window, Simpson obtained a duplicate key to the stable, and stole the horse.
- Then he was confronted by the trainer whom he struck with the stick.
- Simpson had the motive, he was in the proximity of the crime, he had a weapon, and his scarf had been found with the trainer.

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Unanswered Questions

- If all that Simpson wanted was to hurt the horse, he did not need to take it out of the stable.
- How could he get a duplicate key, and why was it not found in his possession?
- Which chemist sold him the opium that was added to the curry?
- How could he know that curry, which would disguise the taste of opium, be prepared for dinner that night?
- How did he drug the food?
- Where was the stolen horse?

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Sherlock Holmes' Discoveries

- Holmes was not satisfied with the loose ends. He investigated independently
- In the trainer's pocket was a milliner's bill for an expensive dress, purchased under a different name
- The trainer's wife did not possess that dress
- A surgical knife was found near the scene of crime. Some delicate operation must have been planned
- The stable dog had not barked
- Some sheep in the paddock nearby had suddenly gone lame

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Holmes' Conclusions

- The bill for the dress meant that the trainer had a mistress, extra expenditure, and a motive to influence the race unfairly
- He was the one person who could know that a spicy dish was on the menu that night, and add opium to it
- The dog did not bark because there was no stranger that night. It was only the trainer
- The man had bet against the horse, and so wanted to hurt it and influence the race
- The knife he had was meant to carry out a delicate cut in the horse's leg. He had practised the operation before on the sheep
- On the night of the crime, the horse kicked and killed its trainer in fear and bolted
- Holmes finds Silver Blaze in a neighboring stable, painted to disguise its identity

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The Different Ways of Working of Mind, Thinking and Creativity

The Police	Sherlock Holmes
Look at the evidence there is	Looks at what is, and also notices what is absent
Go by physical evidence	Uses imagination and intuition
Quick to come to a conclusion	Refuses to be satisfied with a partial explanation
What does not fit within the conceptual framework is conveniently left alone	Every minute detail has to be reconciled