

Shylock Holmes and the Inconclusive Case

By Christopher Winn

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My dear Doctor Wattson (if that is still the name by which you go),

I write to you *today*, though time is but a social construct, with these arbitrary symbols denoting arbitrary connotations, concerning a most perplexing case. Indeed, whether or not this subjective experience even constitutes a case is as unclear as everything else in life.

I had hoped you might join me, insomuch as two separate consciousnesses can ever be said to interface, but due to your insistence upon adhering to the archaic norms of cisgendered heteronormative marriage and parenthood, this was not to be. Though, it occurs to me that because my will was for you to accompany me, that I identify as one who was accompanied, and therefore I was. Thus, writing this letter to you is as pointless as every other pursuit.

As I was saying, and as you know, seeing as I have just established that you were there (should you also consent to identifying as being there, regardless of your physical coordinates), there was a murder.

I do not dare go into detail as to *who* was murdered, for their state of noncorporeality renders it impossible for them to convey their own identity. A local police officer assumed that the government identification found upon the corpse might be of some use, but I enlightened him as to the possibility that said corpse may have reevaluated its own fluid identity just as its bodily fluids were draining into the gutter.

This same officer then attempted to take the corpse's fingerprints, but I drove him back with my riding crop for fear that this corpse did not identify as a member of the Hominidae family and thus would not possess fingerprints.

While I was savaging this deplorable with my crop, another passerby identified their self (I know it was not a selves for it spoke only in the first-person singular) as a human being with the name Caroline who was of the womanly persuasion. She (I triple-checked her preferred pronouns) seemed most distressed by the corpse, for its likeness reminded her of her own twin sister. I struck this impudent Caroline across the face forthright.

"Now listen here, you stupid little slut," I hissed. "Whatever license you may have taken in presuming to identify this thing or things' identity in life shall not be allowed to besmirch it in death. The continuity of identity cannot be determined without consent. Show some respect, or I'll have the officer here take you in for reeducation."

She complained of my use of this historically misogynistic slur, and I assured her that I too am a woman. Adjusting my balls, for they had gone askew during this series of heated encounters, I proceeded with my professional assessment of the scene.

This alleged sister of the object(s) or entity(s) or mental construct(s) putrefying within the gutter again interjected as I roved my gaze around to catch whatever chance refractions of light might happen along. "I know who did it; I already filed a report!"

I waved her away. "Yes, I have read that racist, sexist, ableist, xenophobic, fatphobic, homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic, thanatophobic piece of bigotry, and I shall not be subjected to it again." Drawing my revolver, I fired a warning shot as she ran weeping from the premises, still clutching her teddy bear.

You see Wattson, this Caroline had asserted mere moments after the mortal departure of her alleged twin sister that a rotund, mentally handicapped African man dressed in lingerie had scattered her sister's grey matter with the arc of an axe while shrieking "Allahu Akbar!" This slanderous nonsense was of course immediately discarded due to the error of attributing that particular religion unto this imaginary attacker, for, as we all know, Islam is the religion of peace.

Wearied by the undulations of another inconclusive case, I retired to the nearest pub to relight my crack pipe and think upon why mother held me so much and father so little. I was pleased therein to exchange flirtatious glances with the barkeep, a big, beautiful ebony man (I asked, twice) with the endearing facial features of Down's Syndrome and sporting a red-lace corset which cradled his ample bosoms. Glancing at his prayer rug in the corner as I debated propositioning him for mutual sexual favors, I noted the wooden hilt of some object concealed just beneath it. *Handy, too.* That settled it. I will return to Baker's Street whenever I can bear to walk again; my new friend likes it a little rough. Toodle-oo!

P.S. I just received word from the local precinct; they've ruled this a post-birth abortion! T'was much ado about a mere lump of cells.

Yours,
Shylock Holmes