

## THE GREEK INTERPRETER

### by Arthur Conan Doyle

Sist oppdatert: 15. november 2003

*Contents:*

[Part 3: Holmes goes to work](#)

[Exercises to the text](#)

[Answers to the exercises](#)

[Philosophical explorations](#)

### **Part 3     Holmes goes to work**

"So that was the end of my adventure, Mr. Holmes. I do not know where I was, nor whom I spoke with, nor anything save what I have told you. But I know that there is foul play going on, and I want to help that unhappy man if I can. I told the whole story to Mr. Mycroft Holmes next morning, and subsequently to the police."

We all sat in silence for some little time after listening to this extraordinary narrative. Then Sherlock looked across at his brother.

"Any steps?" he asked.

Mycroft picked up the *Daily News*, which was lying on the side-table.

"Anybody supplying any information as to the whereabouts of a Greek gentleman named Paul Kratides, from Athens, who is unable to speak English, will be rewarded. A similar reward paid to anyone giving information about a Greek lady whose first name is Sophy. X 2473."

"That was in all the dailies. No answer."

"How about the Greek legation?"

"I have inquired. They know nothing."

"A wire to the head of the Athens police, then?"

"Sherlock has all the energy of the family," said Mycroft, turning to me.

"Well, you take the case up by all means and let me know if you do any good."

"Certainly," answered my friend, rising from his chair. "I'll let you know, and Mr. Melas also. In the meantime, Mr. Melas, I should certainly be on my

guard if I were you, for of course they must know through these advertisements that you have betrayed them.”

As we walked home together, Holmes stopped at a telegraph office and sent off several wires.

”You see, Watson,” he remarked, ”our evening has been by no means wasted. Some of my most interesting cases have come to me in this way through Mycroft. The problem which we have just listened to, although it can admit of but one explanation, has still some distinguishing features.”

”You have hopes of solving it?”

”Well, knowing as much as we do, it will be singular indeed if we fail to discover the rest. You must yourself have formed some theory which will explain the facts to which we have listened.”

”In a vague way, yes.”

”What was your idea, then?”

”It seemed to me to be obvious that this Greek girl had been carried off by the young Englishman named Harold Latimer.”

”Carried off from where?”

”Athens, perhaps.”

Sherlock Holmes shook his head. ”This young man could not talk a word of Greek. The lady could talk English fairly well. Inference—that she had been in England some little time, but he had not been in Greece.”

”Well, then, we will presume that she had once come on a visit to England, and that this Harold had persuaded her to fly with him.”

”That is more probable.”

”Then the brother—for that, I fancy, must be the relationship—comes over from Greece to interfere. He imprudently puts himself into the power of the young man and his older associate. They seize him and use violence towards him in order to make him sign some papers to make over the girl’s fortune—of which he may be trustee—to them. This he refuses to do. In order to negotiate with him they have to get an interpreter, and they pitch upon this

Mr. Melas, having used some other one before. The girl is not told of the arrival of her brother and finds it out by the merest accident."

"Excellent, Watson!" cried Holmes. "I really fancy that you are not far from the truth. You see that we hold all the cards, and we have only to fear some sudden act of violence on their part. If they give us time we must have them."

"But how can we find where this house lies?"

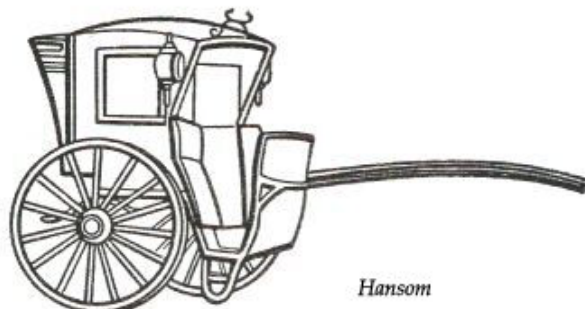
"Well, if our conjecture is correct and the girl's name is or was Sophy Kratides, we should have no difficulty in tracing her. That must be our main hope, for the brother is, of course, a complete stranger. It is clear that some time has elapsed since this Harold established these relations with the girl—some weeks, at any rate since the brother in Greece has had time to hear of it and come across. If they have been living in the same place during this time, it is probable that we shall have some answer to Mycroft's advertisement."



We had reached our house in Baker Street while we had been talking. Holmes ascended the stair first, and as he opened the door of our room he gave a start of surprise. Looking over his shoulder, I was equally astonished. His brother Mycroft was sitting smoking in the armchair.

"Come in, Sherlock! Come in, sir," said he blandly, smiling at our surprised faces. "You don't expect such energy from me, do you, Sherlock? But somehow this case attracts me."

"How did you get here?"  
"I passed you in a hansom."  
"There has been, some new development?" "I had an answer to my advertisement."  
"Ah!" "Yes, it came within a few minutes of your leaving."  
"And to what effect?" Mycroft



Holmes took out a sheet of paper.

"Here it is," said he, "written with a J pen on royal cream paper by a middle-aged man with a weak constitution.

"Sir", he says, "In answer to your advertisement of today's date, I beg to inform you that I know the young lady in question very well. If you should care to call upon me I could give you some particulars as to her painful history. She is living at present at The Myrtles, Beckenham.

"Yours faithfully, J. Davenport."

"He writes from Lower Brixton," said Mycroft Holmes. "Do you not think that we might drive to him now, Sherlock, and learn these particulars?"

"My dear Mycroft, the brother's life is more valuable than the sister's story. I think we should call at Scotland Yard for Inspector Gregson and go straight out to Beckenham. We know that a man is being done to death, and every hour may be vital."

"Better pick up Mr. Melas on our way," I suggested. "We may need an interpreter."

"Excellent," said Sherlock Holmes. "Send the boy for a four-wheeler, and we shall be off at once." He opened the table-drawer as he spoke, and I noticed that he slipped his revolver into his pocket. "Yes," said he in answer to my glance, "I should say, from what we have heard, that we are dealing with a particularly dangerous gang."

It was almost dark before we found ourselves in Pall Mall, at the rooms of Mr, Melas. A gentleman had just called for him, and he was gone.

"Can you tell me where?" asked Mycroft Holmes.

"I don't know, sir," answered the woman who had opened the door, "I only know that he drove away with the gentleman in a carriage."

"Did the gentleman give a name?"

"No, sir."

"He wasn't a tall, handsome, dark young man?"

"Oh, no, sir. He was a little gentleman, with glasses, thin in the face, but very pleasant in his ways, for he was laughing all the time that he was talking."

“Come along!” cried Sherlock Holmes abruptly. “This grows serious,” he observed as we drove to Scotland Yard. “These men have got hold of Melas again. He is a man of no physical courage, as they are well aware from their experience the other night. This villain was able to terrorize him the instant that he got into his presence. No doubt they want his professional services, but, having used him, they may be inclined to punish him for what they will regard as his treachery.”

## Dictionary

<i>advertisement</i>	kunngjøring, annonse
<i>associate</i>	medhjelper, forbindelse
<i>conjecture</i>	gjetning, antagelse
<i>constitution</i>	almen helsetilstand, støpning, konstitusjon
<i>dailies</i>	dagsaviser
<i>distinguish</i>	å skjelne noe fra noe annet
<i>elapse</i>	(om tid) gå, passere
<i>experience</i>	erfaring
<i>foul play</i>	urent eller uhederlig spill
<i>glance</i>	stirrende blick
<i>hansom</i>	rask, to-hjulet hestevogn
<i>imprudent</i>	tankeløs, ubetenksom, usømmelig
<i>inference</i>	tankeslutning
<i>inquire</i>	undersøke
<i>interfere</i>	blande seg utidig inn i andres anliggender
<i>legation</i>	tidligere tiders ambassade
<i>merest accident</i>	den reneste tilfældighet
<i>narrative</i>	fortelling
<i>obvious</i>	opplagt, selvfølgelig
<i>persuade</i>	overbevise, overtale
<i>probable</i>	sannsynlig
<i>reward</i>	belønning
<i>subsequently</i>	deretter, hvoretter
<i>treachery</i>	svik, bedrag
<i>trustee</i>	bobestyrer, ansvarlig for stiftelse o.l.
<i>villain</i>	skurk, forbryter
<i>whereabouts</i>	hvor en person oppholder seg
<i>wire</i>	her: telegram (eg. kabel)

## ***Exercises***

### **A. Answer these questions**

- 1. Who did Mr. Melas tell his story to?**

- 2. What steps had Mycroft and Mr. Melas taken?**

- 3. What did doctor Watson think was the truth behind the puzzle?**

- 4. Why did Holmes ask Mr. Melas to be on his guard?**

- 5. How and why did Holmes think that it would not be difficult to find the men?**

### **B. Fill in the gaps using the following words**

*other — negotiate — refuses — relationship — finds — associate — fortune — seize — violence — interpreter*

“Then the brother—for that, I fancy, must be the \_\_\_\_\_ —comes over from Greece to interfere. He imprudently puts himself into the power of the young man and his older \_\_\_\_\_. They \_\_\_\_\_ him and use \_\_\_\_\_ towards him in order to make him sign some papers to make over the girl’s \_\_\_\_\_—of which he may be trustee—to them. This he \_\_\_\_\_ to do. In order to \_\_\_\_\_ with him they have to get an \_\_\_\_\_ , and they pitch upon this Mr. Melas, having used some

\_\_\_\_\_ one before. The girl is not told of the arrival of her brother and \_\_\_\_\_ it out by the merest accident.”

### C. Written assignment

How would you write the advertisement Mycroft and Mr. Melas wrote to find out about the girl and her brother?

### D. Word understanding

***Find synonyms to the words in bold face***

“Well, if our **conjecture** (\_\_\_\_\_) is correct and the girl’s name is or was Sophy Kratides, we should have no difficulty in **tracing** (\_\_\_\_\_) her. That must be our main hope, for the brother is, of course, a complete stranger. It is clear that some time has **elapsed** (\_\_\_\_\_) since this Harold **established** (\_\_\_\_\_) these relations with the girl—some weeks, at any rate -since the brother in Greece has had time to hear of it and come **across** (\_\_\_\_\_). If they have been living in the same place during this time, it is **probable** (\_\_\_\_\_) that we shall have some answer to Mycroft’s advertisement.”

### E. Verbs

***Put the verbs in the brackets in correct form in the gaps***

We had (to reach) \_\_\_\_\_ our house in Baker Street while we had been (to talk) \_\_\_\_\_. Holmes (to ascend) \_\_\_\_\_ the stair first, and as he (to open) \_\_\_\_\_ the door of our room he (to give) \_\_\_\_\_ a start of surprise. (to look) \_\_\_\_\_ over his shoulder, I was equally (to astonish) \_\_\_\_\_. His brother Mycroft was (to sit) \_\_\_\_\_ smoking in the armchair. “Come in, Sherlock! Come in, sir,” said he blandly, (to smile) \_\_\_\_\_ at our surprised faces. “You don’t expect such energy from me, do you, Sherlock? But somehow this case (to attract) \_\_\_\_\_ me.”

## Answers

### A. Answer these questions

1. **Who did Mr. Melas tell his story to?**  
*He told Mycroft Holmes and the police.*
2. **What steps had Mycroft and Mr. Melas taken?**  
*They had put an advertisement in the Daily News.*
3. **What did doctor Watson think was the truth behind the puzzle?**  
*That the girl, Sophie, had been carried off by Harold Latimer when she was on a visit to England and when her brother tries to interfere they kidnap him and try to get him to sign away his sisters fortune to them, but he refuses.*
4. **Why did Holmes ask Mr. Melas to be on his guard?**  
*Because of the advertisement.*
5. **How and why did Holmes think that it would not be difficult to find the men?**  
*Through the advertisement because some time must have elapsed since Harold established relations with the girl—some weeks, at any rate -since the brother in Greece had time to hear of it and come across. If they had been living in the same place during this time, it was probable that Mycroft's advertisement would be answered.*

### B. Fill in the gaps using these words

*"Then the brother—for that, I fancy, must be the relationship—comes over from Greece to interfere. He imprudently puts himself into the power of the young man and his older associate. They seize him and use violence towards him in order to make him sign some papers to make over the girl's fortune—of which he may be trustee—to them. This he refuses to do. In order to negotiate with him they have to get an interpreter, and they pitch upon this Mr. Melas, having used some other one before. The girl is not told of the arrival of her brother and finds it out by the merest accident."*

### C. Written assignment

[Pupil's own text.]



**D. Word understanding**

Here are some synonyms to the words in the exercise. The list is not in any way complete, so other answers may be right also:

*conjecture = guess, guesswork, supposition, surmise, inference, assumption, speculation...*

*tracing = finding, locating, hitting upon, uncovering, discovering...*

*elapsed = passed, passed by, slipped away...*

*established = started, created, began, launched...*

*across = diagonally, from corner to corner...*

*probable = likely, credible, possible, plausible...*

**E. Verbs**

*We had reached our house in Baker Street while we had been talking. Holmes ascended the stair first, and as he opened the door of our room he gave a start of surprise. Looking over his shoulder, I was equally astonished. His brother Mycroft was sitting smoking in the armchair. "Come in, Sherlock! Come in, sir," said he blandly, smiling at our surprised faces. "You don't expect such energy from me, do you, Sherlock? But somehow this case attracts me."*

## *Philosophical explorations*

1. *Mycroft puts an advertisement in the newspaper wanting information about Paul Kratides and Sophy, knowing very well that this will inform the kidnappers that Mr. Melas has been talking. So by doing this he puts the life of Mr. Melas in great danger.*

*Is it right of him to do this? Should he not think more of the security of Mr. Melas than the chance of having the case solved? How far can we go in jeopardising other people's lives even if the purpose is very good? Is the life of one person less valuable than the life of a hundred persons?*

2. *Sherlock says that since they know so much about this case already, it would be "singular" (i.e. most surprising) if they shouldn't be able to find out the rest of the story.*

*Is this always so? Is it always easier to find a solution when you know much than when you know little? Think of a child and an adult. The child knows little, the adult knows much, much more. But if you ask them what is the meaning of life, who will have the best answer?*

3. *A detective like Holmes tries to reconstruct what has happened based on the available facts in the case. If a fact is presented which cannot fit into the theory, then the theory must be changed. A detective therefore works pretty much like most scientists work today: trying out theories whilst at the same time collecting more and more facts.*

*When can we stop looking for more facts? When we have found an answer? What answer? Sherlock stops looking when the case is solved, i.e. when the villains are caught and thrown into prison. But that doesn't mean there are no more facts out there....*

*When should a scientist stop looking for more facts? If he should go on looking forever, he can never attain truth because the truth will always be a stone's throw ahead of him. On the other hand, if he should stop at any given time, he also fails to reach truth since there are lots of more facts out there to be collected and interpreted.*