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Sample file

**BORGO PRESS BOOKS  
BY BRIAN BALL**

*The Baker Street Boys: Two Baker Street Irregulars Novellas*  
*The Evil at Montaine: A Novel of Horror (Ruane #2)*  
*Mark of the Beast: A Novel of Horror (Ruane #1)*

Sample file

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# DEDICATION

*For Elisabeth*

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# THE CASE OF THE CAPTIVE CLAIRVOYANT

## CHAPTER ONE

If Mr. Sherlock Holmes had been in the country when the Baker Street Irregulars stumbled across the mystery which I have called “The Case of the Captive Clairvoyant,” then no doubt he would have given immediate assistance.

But Mr. Holmes was in Switzerland engaged in a deadly duel of wits with his most feared opponent, the evil Professor Moriarty; and so the Baker Street Irregulars, the gang of ragamuffins who sometimes assisted Mr. Holmes in his investigations, had to rely on their own wits. I, Sergeant Hopkins, had taken it upon myself to record the investigations in which the great Sherlock Holmes was employed to only a limited extent—those not described by Dr. Watson.

It all began—and ended—in the theatre where Sparrow was employed, Trump’s Music-hall.

That week there was a mixed bag of acts. There was Signor Maccarelli, who threw knives; Gorgeous Gertie, who sang sentimental ballads, Madame Pompadour the comedienne; and a magician; but the star of the show was The Amazing Marvin, as he was described. “Marvel at the Mystic Powers of Marvin,” so the poster invited passers-by: “Hypnotist Extraordinary! Mentalist Supreme!”

“Ah, excellent!” beamed Mr. Trump to Bert the doorman as he saw the packed house. “Marvin’s still bringing them in. Another week of this and who knows—I could get him to play to royalty!” And he clicked his heels as he rocked backwards and forwards with satisfaction.

“Marvin’s good,” agreed Bert. “Sparrow!” he yelled. “Placards for Mr. Marvin—he’s on in fifteen minutes!”

“Right, Bert!” called Sparrow.

“Get me a drink!” yelled a large lady from one of the dressing-rooms. “Be quick, Sparrow, darling!”

Sparrow sometimes thought he needed three sets of legs and hands. He was a general dogs-body for the artistes, as well as a sweeper-up and an assistant scene-changer, but his principal job was to make sure that the placards which announced each act were properly displayed on the stage before the artistes began their acts.

“Gin and polly coming up!” he cried to Madame Pompadour, who was in need of a drink before her act. “I got the placards ready, Bert!” he yelled back to the doorman.

“How’s the new boy shaping up, Bert?” Mr. Trump asked.

“Sparrow?” said Bert. “He’s a good lad, very obliging and quick, and he’s popular with the artistes, especially young Mary.”

“Is that so?” Mr. Trump said, frowning.

“I’ll tell him to keep away from her if you like, sir,” said Bert, anxious to oblige his employer.

“No, don’t do that,” said Mr. Trump. “He isn’t doing any harm. Anyway,” he said, catching sight of the small figures “she might need cheering up.”

Bert saw the small pale face of the girl, whose bright red dress emphasised her pallor. Then Bert looked at her huge, staring eyes.

“No,” agreed Bert, swallowing nervously. “She do stare so, don’t she, Mr. Trump?”

Mr. Trump shrugged.

“Marvin needs her in the act—but she’s a trouper and she’s got to bear up. The theatre’s a hard place, Bert, but it’s our living and Marvin’s and the girl’s too. But you can let the boy talk to her. And Bert,” he added.

“Yessir?”

“Let me know if he hears anything interesting from her, will you?”

“Such as what, Mr. Trump?”

“Oh, little things, you know. Nothing special—I just feel rather concerned for her. But you’ll remember what I said?”

“You can rely on me, Mr. Trump,” said Bert as Mr. Trump went to the front of the house. “Now, what does Sparrow talk to her about?”

Sparrow was listening, not talking; and as he listened he realised