

The Foul Case of the Feculent Fiend

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INT. VICTORIAN SEWER TUNNEL - DAY

The brick-lined subterranean canals stretch forward and back as far as the eye can see.

SUPER: London 1890

DOCTOR JOHN H. WATSON, 50s, hoves into view and picks his way along the slippery walkway at the side of the dry sewer.

DOCTOR WATSON
Are you sure about this?

SHERLOCK HOLMES, 50s, follows him onto the walkway.

HOLMES
Absolutely.

Holmes drops to one knee and pokes into the sewer sludge.

HOLMES
See, the excrement does not flow.

He stirs the faecal matter around.

DOCTOR WATSON
Oh, I say, Holmes, can you not agitate the noxious material so.

Holmes stands.

HOLMES
My good Doctor, there is foul work at play here, fouler than any excrement.

DOCTOR WATSON
You don't mean, Moriarty?

HOLMES
No, Watson. Moriarty is not at the bottom of this foul smelling hole.

Watson laughs.

DOCTOR WATSON
Foul smelling bottom hole you are such a wag.

HOLMES
This is no time for levity.

Watson blushes and opens his mouth to respond when...

A melodic WHISTLE floats through the air.

HOLMES
Ah, my fears are confirmed.

Holmes strides along the walkway and turns a corner.

HOLMES (O.C.)
Come, Watson, the game is afoot.

WALKWAY - FURTHER ALONG

Doctor Watson catches up with Holmes.

DOCTOR WATSON
What was that whistle?

HOLMES
That nefarious sound was...

Holmes extracts a bamboo pipe from his jacket.

HOLMES
A Sumatran Jungle whistle, from,
well, er Sumatra.

WHISTLE

DOCTOR WATSON
How did you know?

HOLMES
Elementary my Dear Watson.

DOCTOR WATSON
Alimentary surely?

Holmes pokes the ordure once more.

HOLMES
Sedimentary maybe?

Holmes points to an offshoot passage.

HOLMES
Come, our adversary awaits.

SEWER PUMPING STATION

Watson comes in behind Holmes.

Ahead, surrounding the pumping station and blocking it entirely, is a mountain of waste, lard, excreta, cloth - anything that has found its way into the sewer system.

That's not the odd thing though, no, that's the rats.

An army of the ugly critters scramble around on the pile making it bigger and stacking new things onto it.

Watson cannot process the scene and control his motor functions at the same time and walks straight into Holmes.

Holmes falls forward but manages to thrust his cane out in front of him in the nick of time. Well, almost. The tip of his long nose dips into the night soil.

DOCTOR WATSON

What the Fu --

HOLMES

Watson, as extreme as our predicament may be, remember we are English.

Doctor Watson points ahead.

DOCTOR WATSON

Fu Manchu.

Holmes' head follows his partner's finger, poop dripping off his nose as he does.

Ahead is FU MANCHU, 60s, a classic Oriental villain with flowing robes and a ridiculous drooping moustache.

HOLMES

My Oriental nemesis, I was right.

FU MANCHU

Holmes, we meet at last.

He puts a bamboo whistle to his mouth and pipes a tune.

The rats stop building and head straight for our heroes.

DOCTOR WATSON

The fiend has them in his thrall.

A few of the furry beasts are almost upon Holmes, who is still inches from a full face dung dunking.

HOLMES

Watson, assistance, please.

Watson pulls Holmes to his feet. Holmes pulls out his own bamboo whistle and quickly pipes a mellifluous tune.

The rats stop, look confused, well as much as rats can.

FU MANCHU

That little jig is no match for this.

Fu Manchu takes a deep breath, purses his lip and blows.

The WHISTLE is pure, increases in volume with each second.

The rats raise up onto their hind legs and march forward in some macabre impersonation of infantry soldiers.

Watson clasps his hands over his ears.

DOCTOR WATSON

For God's sake Holmes, do something.

Holmes WHISTLES again, redoubles his own efforts.

The poor rodents do not know which tune to follow and instead pinball around bumping into each other.

The sounds waves also have an impact on the massive pile of excrement, it wobbles.

Fu Manchu laughs.

HOLMES

Have I amused you?

FU MANCHU

It is just that...

He pulls a second bamboo whistle from his robes.

FU MANCHU

I am ambidextrous.

With that he WHISTLES on top of his WHISTLE, the sound is layered, unearthly and shakes the defecation dam further.

The rats stop their confused circling and rush towards our valiant pair of crime-fighters.

Holmes laughs, long and loud.

FU MANCHU

Why do you laugh like a loon?

Holmes pulls a small shinning instrument from his jacket.

It is not a bamboo whistle this time, it is metal and shaped a little like a letter J.

FU MANCHU

What is that strange implement?

Holmes grins.

HOLMES

This is a Sax-Rohmer-ophone.

Doctor Watson GROANS.

Holmes puts the Sax-Rohmer-ophone to his lips and blows out a deep tone. His fingers move over the keys to modulate the harmony and create a melodious song.

The rats clearly aren't fans of the new sound, they drop to all fours and dart off in all directions.

FU MANCHU

Curse you Holmes, why couldn't you stick to your infernal violin.

Holmes increases his efforts.

DOCTOR WATSON

Holmes, the rats are leaving.

Holmes nods the sax towards the huge mound of waste which vibrates and shakes in time with the music.

Fu Manchu follows the good Doctor's gaze.

FU MANCHU

Ha, not so fast.

He jumps out of the way as the first sections of compacted guano start to fall out of the dam, as does a yellow geyser.

FU MANCHU

I will return, and I will --

The pressure of the pent up pee is so great that it sends the villain crashing down a nearby tunnel and out of sight.

DOCTOR WATSON

(laughing)

So that's what they mean by the yellow peril.

Holmes finally laughs too.