



The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, Inc.  
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## The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota February 2019 Notice

### Membership Renewal

If you've not yet done so, please renew your annual membership for 2019. You can renew online with PayPal or a credit card or use the attached form available on the web site. Dues remain the same (\$15 single or \$20 family) but additional contributions are always welcome. The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, Inc. is a valid Section 501(c)(3) organization. Any contributions beyond your membership dues should be deductible as charitable contributions.

### Study Group

**Saturday February 16 at 2:00 p.m.**

Steve Schier will lead the group in a discussion of "The Sussex Vampire" at the St. Anthony Park Public Library, 2245 Como Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108, 651-642-0411. See the last pages of this Notice for discussion questions to ponder.

### Upcoming Dates and Stories

The group normally meets the third Saturday of the month at 2:00 p.m. Next up is "The Missing Three-Quarter" March 16 followed by "Abbey Grange" April 20. Locations TBD.

### Movies:

"**Sherlock Holmes 3**" with Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law will hit theaters December 25, **2020**. This follows 2009's "Sherlock Holmes" and 2011's "Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows." It will take us that long to recover from "**Holmes and Watson.**"

### Theater:

Ken Ludwig's "**Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery,**" performed by the Lakeshore Players Theater, ran at White Bear Lake's Hanifl Performing Arts Center from January 10 - 27. This is the same play mounted by the Park Square Theatre last year. Some Norwegian Explorers were able to attend. I was unaware of this little gem so my apologies for not getting the word out sooner. If you become aware of local Sherlockian events that may be of interest to our membership, please let me know so I can get the word out.

"**My Dear Watson: A Sherlock Holmes Musical**" at Chicago's Edge Theater February 5-23. The show is part of the Chicago Musical Theater Festival. Synopsis: Follow the legendary friendship of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson. Through the mystery, action, and cleverness woven throughout Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, "My Dear Watson" looks beyond the realm of narrative and into the heart of the man himself . . . that is, if he has one at all. In this dramatic musical told from the perspective of Dr. Watson, we are forced to reanalyze and redefine love and friendship for a man who is seemingly incapable of both. Is there a man in the machine?

*You may have read of the remarkable explorations of a Norwegian named Sigerson...*  
"The Adventure of the Empty House"

**“The Play That Goes Wrong,”** at the Orpheum Theater May 7-12. Broadway’s funniest and longest-running play is a hilarious hybrid of Monty Python and Sherlock Holmes. Welcome to opening night of ‘The Murder at Haversham Manor’ where things are quickly going from bad to utterly disastrous. With an unconscious leading lady, a corpse that can’t play dead, and actors who trip over everything (including their lines), it’s “A Riotous Explosion of Comedy!” (The Daily Beast) and “Tons of Fun for All Ages!” (HuffPost). As with other recent plays and movies, we will be organizing a group event for one of the nights.

**Triennial Conference August 8-11, 2019**

Save the date and mark your calendars for our next conference hosted jointly by the Norwegian Explorers, Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections, and the University of Minnesota Libraries. The conference theme, quoting from some words and phrases in the Canon, is **“Dark Places, Wicked Companions, and Strange Experiences.”** Gary Thaden and Julie McKuras are co-chairing the planning committee and will be looking for volunteers for a variety of tasks and projects. Please let them know if you’re interested in assisting. Use the flyer accompanying this Notice to register or go to the web site for a fillable form. The registration deadline is July 12.

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“The Adventure of the Empty House”

The February Study Group will meet at the St. Anthony Park Public Library, 2245 Como Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108, 651-642-0411. Steve Schier will lead the discussion of “**The Sussex Vampire**” as the group addresses these thoughts and questions:

1. Conan Doyle here is pursuing the post-DRACULA (published in 1897) vogue of the literary vampire. That vogue is still very much with us. What accounts for its staying power and for the abundance of vampire literature of which this story is a small part?
2. The vampire is an intriguing element in the story's title. Does the quality of the mystery leave you satisfied with Doyle's use of vampirism in the story?
3. Did Ferguson think that the firm of Morrison, Morrison, and Dodd were attorneys? By their own description, they were assessors of machinery. But if so, how did they become involved with the Matilda Briggs and the giant rat of Sumatra? And for that matter, if Ferguson was a tea-broker, why was he involved with a Peruvian merchant in the importation of nitrates?
4. Was Jacky's infirmity truly caused by a childhood fall, do you think, or was his condition due to some embarrassing or shameful illness? Was this illness possibly something that had afflicted Big Bob Ferguson as well, causing the formerly “slab-sided” athlete's frame to be “fallen in,” as Watson put it? Or perhaps Jacky was the victim of abuse or mental illness?
5. When visiting Mrs. Ferguson in her locked room, Watson made the comment, “It struck me as I looked at it that if Ferguson tried to force his way to his wife he would find it no easy matter.” I thought that she was simply being kept away from the baby. What might have made Watson think of it in quite that way? After identifying Jacky as the culprit, Holmes and Watson later left the Fergusons alone to discuss their problems. Was this wise, or was Mrs. Ferguson in some danger? Do you think the couple could forgive and forget their troubles?
6. In Grimm's fairy tales there are countless stories of wicked siblings. Did Holmes's mention of Grimm's fairy tales suggest that he already suspected what was going on at Cheeseman's?
7. At the end of the story, the reader is satisfied that Jacky is indeed the culprit, and even Bob Ferguson seems to accept this as the truth. But is it so certain that Jacky was the villain? Is there any real proof?
8. Holmes's suggestion of a year at sea for Jacky seems too frivolous to take seriously. What do you suppose really happened to the unhappy boy?

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