

Appetite for Murder

A Mystery Lover's Cookbook

Kathy Borich

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Manufactured in the United States of America.

This book is dedicated to my mother,
who instilled in me a love
for the art of cooking
and the beauty of literature.

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Our menu includes *Grilled Quail Salad with Tarragon Citrus Vinaigrette, Brandied Pate de Foie Gras Pie, Smothered Pheasant in Sherry Cream Sauce, Pan Seared Venison with Wild Mushrooms and Chili Glaze, and Wild Rice and Pecan Pilaf.*

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Our menu bubbles over with seventeen exotic spices. In addition to the *Kasmiri Griddle Kabobs*, it features *Vegetable Pulao, Broccoli with Peanuts, Ginger, and Indian Spices; Prawn Balchow, and Grape Raita with Cilantro, Mint, and Green Chile Spiked with Yogurt.*

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Let’s indulge in *Tarte Bourbonnaise*, *Birnennwecken Pear Cake from the Berne District with Pears, Prunes, and Figs soaked in Wine*, *Fondue Brillat-Savarin with Sliced White Truffles*, *Drunken Strawberries Featuring a Fruity Young Pinot Noir*, and *Tarte Suisse with Pine Nuts and Fresh Swiss Chard*.

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Enjoy the elegant dinner at fabulous Savarini's as though it's your last as you nibble on *Mushroom Omelettes in Port Sauce, Tournedos Macconnaise, and Veal Sweetbreads in the Basque Style.*

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Let's get our picnic off to a great start with some tips on picking the Quintessential Ham as well as an ode to the gastronomical delights of real *Dijon Mustard*. Complete your epicurean meal with *Golden Cheese Soufflé with Peppery Bacon, and French Potato Salad Bathed in Vermouth, Chervil, Chives and Tarragon.*

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Horace Rumpole is not particularly thrilled with "wafer thin slices of anything," and he thinks crime is a more honest type of robbery than the prices at La Maison Jean Pierre. Its haughty chef must eat some humble pie before Rumpole agrees to take on his case.

Rumpole's dinner features *Steak and Kidney Pud with Mashed Spuds on the Side*. We'll round that out with more of Rumpole's favorites, like *Shepherd's Pie*, and close with that curiously named fruity pudding, *Spotted Dick*.

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Slowly he becomes obsessed with a long forgotten crime. From his hospital bed Morse sets out to prove the innocence of two men hanged in 1859, exercising only, as Poirot called them, "the little grey cells."

Our meal features that decadent fried English classic, *Fish and Chips*, served up with plenty of grease and washed down with as many pints of ale as necessary. We've even thrown in a few other pub delicacies with those strange names, like *Toad in the Hole, Bubble and Squeak, and Bangers and Mash.*

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Quite a grisly scene, their last supper. Three plates of food, cold and congealing, like the blood that sauces them. Chief Inspector Reginald Wexford will have to wade through two more corpses, one hanged and one burnt, before he finds the killer.

Our Sunday dinner features *Roast Beef with Yorkshire Pudding and Browned Roast Potatoes*, as thoroughly British and old fashioned as Wexford himself. Let's begin with *Hearty White Wine and Garlic Soup*, then on to *Fresh Mushroom Salad with Watercress and Scallions*. With our main course try a nice portion of *Leeks au Gratin*, and close with a dessert of exquisite lightness itself, *Melon with Strawberries and Anisette*.

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From the musty darkness of his haunted mansion, Inspector Dupin unravels a case of graphic violence. A mother and daughter are brutally hacked to death, bloody clumps of human hair yanked out by the roots, and one of the corpses stuffed up the chimney.

We've prepared the tireless inspector a simple French boiled dinner, *Pot au Feu* or "Pot in the Fire," recreated with all its authentic time honored flare. Or perhaps, when he has a final insight into the case, Dupin might care to dine more festively on *Chicken Edgar with Truffles Swimming in a Rich Wine Sauce*, complemented by *Crème Fraiche aux Fruit*.

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In the Kitchen with Inspector and Ellery Queen

No wonder our wonder boy fails! What scene could create more unnerving unrest? Ellery and Inspector Queen match wits with their villain in a crowded department store on the last shopping day before Christmas.

It is a *Pastrami Sandwich*, resplendent with a dill pickle, which Ellery brandishes sword-like, as he retells his triumph. We have recreated his, New York Deli style, and added some traditional sides dishes, such as *Kasha Varnishka* and *Cheese Knish*. Our *Turkey Stuffing* is likely to please Inspector Queen, although his exact recipe is a closely guarded family secret.

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A group of friends meets regularly for dinner, serving up tales of crime with their capons. The supper party is replete with pompous writers, stuffy experts, and enough vanity and ego to fill Yankee Stadium. However, it is Asimov's unobtrusive and thoroughly deferential waiter Henry who regularly delivers the coupe de grace.

Tonight let us enjoy the white-gloved service of the nonpareil Henry as he serves us *Iridescent Turtle Soup with Sherry on the Side*, *Veal Marengo in an Orange-Brandy Sauce*, and *Black Forest Torte Besotted with Kirsch*.

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Let’s whip up some delightful *Meringues with Strawberries and Sabayon Custard*, just like Aunt Chris used to make. But don’t taste them before you whet your appetite with *Roquefort-Baked Avocados*, and dine on *Cod* “that might have leapt from the water into the pan” *Smothered in Cucumber Sauce*.

Tony Hillerman

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Navajo “Sole” Food

The body is in pretty bad shape. The soles of the feet are cut away. And the hands too. What’s left of the body, “mostly a tattered ragbag of bare bone, sinew, gristle, and a little hard muscle” is rotten. It’s enough to make Sgt. Jim Chee of the Navajo Tribal Police lose his appetite.

We have conspired to cook up something extra tasty for our favorite tribal policeman. Can we entice him to wrap his dry lips around moist and meaty *Navajo Kneel Down Bread*, *Hopi Venison Stew*, *Navajo Blue Hominy Posole*, and *Peach Crisp with Pinon Nuts*?

Introduction

Introduction

Come, Watson, come. The game's afoot.

Who hasn't secretly longed to heed the summons and go with Holmes into Victorian London's foggy night air, vanishing into a waiting carriage, the snap of the whip and echoing hoof beats piercing the darkness? Well, now it's possible. You can enter the world of your favorite detective and sit down with him or her for a quiet supper. Or morning tea, a Sunday picnic – even an old fashioned pub-crawl.

Appetite for Murder: A Mystery Lover's Cookbook takes readers on a culinary tour of classic crime fiction with the likes of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, Edgar Allan Poe, and even Tony Hillerman. Each series of recipes features a particular detective and opens with an atmospheric vignette that evokes memories and sweeps the reader up into a favorite mystery all over again. Readers relive the tales of favorite sleuths and then turn their hands to creating the fare that solved the crime or caught the culprit.

In some cases the choice of cuisine actually plays a role in the crime or its solution. A dreadful poisoning launches “A Trifle Dangerous: a Luscious but Lethal Dessert with Miss Marple,” while the curried mutton in “The Adventure of Silver Blaze” provides Holmes with the solution to the crime.

Other recipes are the fare of murderer or sleuth. Isaac Asimov and his fellow Black Widowers dine upon succulent veal Marengo, iridescent turtle soup, and sinfully rich black forest cake as they rack their brains to uncover unsolved crimes.

In a few instances, although there's no specific menu in the story, I've created one that fits the atmosphere. In this third recipe type there is considerable room for improvisation and creativity. We enjoy “French Country Fare and Fowl” with Poe's Inspector Dupin, feasting upon steaming *Pot au Feu* and rich *Crème Fraiche*.

I treat the mystery authors and their detectives with admiration but not awe. Their foibles are duly noted, laughed over, and warmly accepted like the eccentricities of a favorite uncle. We love Holmes even more for his misanthropic arrogance, Poirot for his preening vanity, and Rumpole for his stoic endurance of “she who must be obeyed.”

Crime and cooking are old friends. What makes ***Appetite for Murder*** unique is that it draws upon the classic and popular detective fiction found on nearly everyone's bookshelf. What better

prelude to cozying up with one of Ruth Rendell's blood freezing tales than a snug roast beef dinner with her homey detective Reg Wexford. Going to watch the latest installment of Chief Inspector Morse on the tele? Get into the mood with authentic fish and chips and other pub favorites such as Toad in the Hole or Bangers and Mash.

For the gourmet who might complain, like Voltaire, that England has forty-two religions and only two sauces, I rejoin that I have followed my detectives outside the realm of England and allowed them to sample continental cuisine as they pursue crime away from Her Majesty's shores. We've even been so audacious as to cross the Atlantic and visit with Edgar Allan Poe, Ellery Queen, and Isaac Asimov, as well as relative newcomers Martha Grimes and Tony Hillerman.

I have worked with chefs to put new spins, sauces, and sides on this classic cuisine. Simple roast goose is now Christmas Goose with Apricot-Port Glaze, enhanced by Cold Asparagus in Walnut Drizzle and Watercress Fennel Salad with Tarragon-Rosemary Vinaigrette.

Roger Mollet, Executive Chef at the award winning Central Market Cooking School in Austin, Texas, is the mind behind the Hearty Hunter's Supper with Holmes and Watson featured in Chapter One. His killer Pecan Wild Rice Pilaf accompanies Brandied *Pate de Foie Gras* Pie. And Seared Venison is anointed with a piquant Chili Cognac Glaze while the Pheasant is smothered in a Sherry Cream Sauce

Holmes' plain old curried mutton has become Kasmiri Griddle Lamb Kabobs, joined by Grape Raita with Cilantro, Mint, and Green Chile spiked with Yogurt, courtesy of Suneeta Vaswani,. A native of Bombay, India, Ms. Vaswani is an acknowledged expert on Indian cuisine and has contributed articles to *Bon Appetit* magazine.

Our Trifle recipe with Fresh Raspberries and Sherry Drizzle makes this inevitable English dessert anything but. We also whip up a Sage Stuffing for our Succulent Duckling that is considerably improved without the addition of deadly foxglove leaves featured in Agatha Christie's version.

There are also some vintage words about wine selection as well as substitutions for those hard-to-get items like cold woodcock.

I owe my love of cooking to my Italian/French grandmother, who helped raise me among the powdered lace of drying pasta, the warm earth of a back yard tomato garden, and the pungent sweetness of *giambotte*, her savory stovetop stew of weekly leftovers.

In the crowded kitchen, ensconced in the yeasty aroma of fresh bread, my mother and her sisters argued about the merits of basil versus oregano with the same passion some people reserved for politics. They judged their gravies, sauces, and the quality of the fresh herbs they chopped and diced with a sort of sibling jealousy usually saved for potential beaux.

Mother (upper-left), her sisters, and my grandmother

I absorbed all this magic. To this day I share my mother's prejudice for anyone who dares to serve jello. I cannot abide curly-leafed parsley, that showboat herb, so inferior to the plain-leafed Italian variety. Even now, when I smell its unique sweetness, I remember my mother's hands immersed in its perfume.

During my twenty-two years as an English teacher, I lured reluctant readers to the joys of literature by spicing up the dry pages with authentic cuisine. We discovered Voltaire along with handmade crepes whipped up in predawn darkness and nibbled our way through *Jane Eyre* with Victorian teas featuring oven-fresh scones and jam tarts.

This classroom juggling of tarts and tests, quizzes and cuisine, led to my giving seminars on the subject, including *The Literary and Historical Use of Herbs* presented to the International Medieval Institute. Then through a National Endowment for the Humanities Grant in World Literature, I spent a year researching medieval cooking by reading the material in its original Middle English.

My interest in the connection between cooking and crime began with an affinity for classic detective fiction. I relished the austere Sherlock Holmes and also became enamored with that trio of great dames, Agatha Christie, Margery Allingham, and Dorothy L. Sayers.

For some reason whenever I finished a Miss Marple tale, I felt a sudden urge to cook up a "good pot of tea." And I always wondered what treacle tart and seed cake would taste like. Lord Peter Wimsey

introduced me to the magnificence of fine port and Albert Campion to the majesty of High Tea. I even enjoyed slumming with Horace Rumpole as he drank the cheap red wine he fondly called Pommeroy's plonk.

All these strange longings led to a work of love that found me thumbing through my favorites tales not for the crimes but for the crumpets. And I must admit that my favorite, Sherlock Holmes, with his ascetic ways, was not an easy mark. One only had to look at his skeletal frame to know that neither clotted cream nor fish and chips were on his menu.

Currently I enjoy giving Mystery Cooking classes featuring many of the recipes found in this book. Pictured here is a poster from a class at the Central Market Cooking School in Austin, Texas. "A Dinner to Die For" recreated the best of some infamous last suppers from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, and Margery Allingham. Of course, we were careful to leave out the arsenic, foxglove leaves, and poison mushrooms.

Thus was born ***Appetite for Murder: A Mystery Lover's Cookbook***. Because the mysteries that cradle these recipes are classic, the book's subject matter is timeless. And I have taken the traditional recipes and tweaked them with nouveau flair, so the old is suddenly new. It is my aim that this cookbook become a classic in itself and remain a mystery lover's companion for years to come.

THE GAME'S AFOOT

A Hearty Hunter's Supper with Holmes and Watson

"The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor"

*Cooking is like love.
It should be entered into with abandon
or not at all.*

Harriet Van Horne

Like many of the big events in history, it all begins with a wedding. We're not talking the golden apple and Trojan War here, but a "singular occurrence at a fashionable wedding," namely the sudden disappearance of the bride.

A jealous ex-lover disrupts the bridal luncheon, the newly wed American heiress abruptly disappears, and there are rumors of foul play. Lord St. Simon, the very noble yet penniless bachelor, has been left in the lurch.

This perky little melodrama gives us one of Holmes' most timely solutions. "I think that I shall have a whisky and soda, and a cigar after all this cross-questioning," he says. "I had formed my conclusions as to the case before our client came into the room."

And such a fine study in contrasts – stuffy old England and our persnickety groom set against wild, free America and the impetuous bride. Doyle never gets our dialect quite right, though, and his Americans invariably sound like reruns of *The Beverly Hillbillies*. All the talk of "claim jumping, falling down and doing a faint," and this or that being "dreadful hard" begins to pall after a while.

The noble bachelor is a dandy to end all dandies. The son of a duke, both Plantagenet and Tudor blood run in his icy veins. He might be a bit upset about the disappearance of his bride and her accompanying purse strings, but the penniless lord dresses to the nines. What with his high collar, black frock coat, white waistcoat, yellow gloves, patent-leather shoes, and light-colored gaiters, he is Mr. GQ of Victorian England.

But why are the penniless ones always so pompous? While Lord St. Simon understands that Holmes has already managed several delicate cases, he thinks his visit to our detective has to take the cake, class wise. Not one to suffer fools gladly, Holmes replies with his typical wit. "No, I am descending. My last client was the King of Scandinavia."

St. Simon takes the put down in stride. Not much can shatter his ego. In fact, he is so sure of his matrimonial magnetism that he can only fathom that his bride had become suddenly deranged. How else could she abandon such a hunk? And this early, too – during the wedding breakfast!

Which makes our man Holmes sit up in his chair.

They often vanish before the ceremony, and occasionally during the honeymoon;
but I cannot call to mind anything quite so prompt as this. Prey let me have the details.

While Police Lieutenant Lestrade gets soaked dragging the Trafalgar-square fountain in search of Lady St. Simon's body, Holmes sits back in his chair and enjoys a good cigar. He does have to leave the comfort of hearth and home for a mysterious four hours but orders some take out our food delivered to 221 Baker Street. Well, not exactly your typical take out -- perhaps a bit classier than pizza delivery. I mean, when you are about to unveil another example of your brilliance to a command performance of all the relevant parties, you might as well set the stage with a little pizzazz. "A quite Epicurean little cold supper was laid out upon the humble lodging-house mahogany. There were a brace of cold woodcock, a pheasant, a *pate de foie gras* pie, with a group

of ancient and cobwebby bottles.”

Now maybe you'd like to join us while Holmes once again makes fools of about everyone involved in the case. Slide the linen napkin discreetly onto your lap, pick up the sterling fork, and try to look intelligent. We've spun the Victorian fare into the twentieth century and added a little haute cuisine of our own, courtesy of Executive Chef Roger Mollett of the award winning Central Market Cooking School. He's also providing a few words on appropriate wine selection, something just right to fit into those “ancient and cobwebby bottles.”

Our menu includes *Grilled Quail Salad with Tarragon Citrus Vinaigrette*, (Cold woodcock is soooo hard to find today), *Brandied Pate de Foie Gras Pie*, *Smothered Pheasant in Sherry Cream Sauce*, *Pan Seared Venison with Wild Mushrooms and Chili Glaze*, and *Wild Rice and Pecan Pilaf*.

The saucier is a soloist in the orchestra of a great kitchen.

Fernand Point

Grilled Quail Salad with Tarragon Citrus Vinaigrette

Vinaigrette

1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons minced fresh tarragon
3 tablespoons nonfat yogurt
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon sugar
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor. Pulse until thoroughly blended. Season to taste with salt and pepper

Salad

1 large gold bell pepper, roasted and peeled
1 small head of Boston lettuce
1 cups arugula leaves
2 large mushroom caps
2 large quail, split lengthwise
Cooking spray
Salt and pepper

Place a heavy (preferably cast iron) pan over medium heat. Seed and julienne the bell pepper. Rinse Boston lettuce; reserve four large lettuce leaves. Tear remaining lettuce into bite-sized pieces and place in a mixing bowl. Thoroughly rinse and dry arugula. (If not available, spinach leaves may be substituted.) Tear into bite-sized pieces and add to bowl with lettuce.

Spray mushroom caps and quail with cooking spray. Sprinkle with a little salt and pepper. Place mushroom caps and quail in hot skillet. Cook 3-4 minutes. Turn once and continue cooking until mushrooms are softened and quail is cooked through. Remove from pan, slice mushrooms and cut quail in half.

Place lettuce leaves on individual salad plates. Add 1/2 of the dressing to the lettuce / arugula mixture and toss to coat. Divide between plates. Arrange julienned peppers, quail, and mushrooms on top of lettuce. Drizzle salad with remaining dressing.

Serve immediately.

Brandied Foie de Gras Pie

1 cup (1/2 pound) chicken livers
1/2 cup butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
* Small bouquet garni
Black pepper, freshly ground
1 tablespoon brandy
4 to 6 tart sized pre-baked pastry shells
4 to 6 slices sharp cheddar or 6 ounces cream cheese
Freshly cut dill

In a skillet heat 2 tablespoons butter, and fry the onion with the garlic until just beginning to brown. Add the chicken livers, bouquet garni, salt and black pepper, and fry briskly for 3 minutes or until the livers are browned but still pink in the center. Cool, discard the bouquet garni and finely chop mixture or work it in a blender with a little of the remaining butter. Work the mixture through a sieve to remove the liver ducts. Cream the remaining butter and work it into the liver mixture. Add the brandy and taste for seasoning.

Spoon into pastry shells. Cover with a slice of cheddar cheese shaped to fit, or spread a thin layer of cream cheese on top. Garnish with freshly cut dill.

Chill for several hours.

****Bouquet Garni***

Lay 3 sprigs of parsley, 2 sprigs of thyme, and 1 bay leaf in a 6" square of cheesecloth. Gather up the edges and tie into a bundle with kitchen string.

Smothered Pheasant in Sherry Cream Sauce

1 large or 2 small pheasants
1/2 cup flour seasoned with 1/2 cup freshly snipped herbs such as rosemary, tarragon, and parsley
1/3 cup olive oil
1 cup chopped green onions
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 cup sliced mushrooms or 2 medium truffles, sliced
1/2 cup cooking sherry
4 ounces nonfat sour cream

Clean bird; cut up. Roll in seasoned flour. In Dutch oven, brown pieces slowly on both sides in the olive oil, turning once. Drain away oil. Top with the onions, minced garlic, sliced mushrooms and 1/4 cup cooking sherry. Cover tightly and simmer at low heat 1/2 hour. Add sour cream and another 1/4 cup sherry to taste. (You can use 1/4 cup Madeira here if you want to be fancy.) Cover and simmer until tender--approximately 20 minutes

Pan Seared Venison with Wild Mushrooms and Chili Glaze

Sauce

1 cups beef or veal stock
2 tablespoons minced shallots
4 ounces brandy
4 tablespoons catsup
1 tablespoon chili flakes
1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce

Place stock in a heavy saucepan. Over medium heat, reduce by 1/2. Add remaining ingredients, return to a boil, reduce by 1/2. Place ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth. Set aside.

Steaks

1 large tart apple, cored
Cooking spray
2 teaspoons unsalted butter
1/2 cup wild mushrooms, chopped
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon minced green onion
1 pound venison tenderloin
4 teaspoons nonfat yogurt

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Slice apple into 8 thin slices. Spray a nonstick sauté pan with cooking spray. Melt 1 teaspoon butter over medium heat. Sauté apples until lightly browned on both sides. Set aside. Melt remaining butter in pan. Add wild mushrooms, garlic, and green onion. Sauté until tender (approximately 2 minutes.) Remove from pan and set aside.

Return pan to stove; increase heat to high. Lightly salt and pepper venison tenderloin. When pan is very hot, place tenderloin in pan and sear all sides until browned. Place pan in preheated oven for 6-8 minutes, or until cooked to taste. Remove venison from oven and allow to set several minutes. Slice venison (on the bias) into 8 equal slices. Place 2 slices apple on each heated plate. Arrange 2 slices venison on apples. Drizzle venison with sauce; top with mushroom mixture. Top each with a spoonful of yogurt.

Serve immediately.

Wild Rice and Pecan Pilaf

1/2 cup chopped pecans
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme, crumbled
1/4 teaspoon salt
Olive oil spray
1 medium onion peeled and julienned
2 tablespoons minced garlic
1 medium red bell pepper, julienned
1 1/4 cups wild rice, rinsed
2 1/2 cups nonfat chicken broth (or more if needed)
salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Combine pecans, melted butter, thyme, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in a baking dish. Mix well. Place in center of oven; toast 10 minutes or until crisp. Set aside

Spray a heavy 2-quart saucepan with olive oil spray. Place over medium heat. Add onion, garlic, and bell pepper. Sauté 5-7 minutes, or until slightly browned. Transfer to a bowl; set aside.

Spray pan with additional cooking spray; return to medium heat. Add rice, cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly. Add chicken broth, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium low and cover. Simmer 40 minutes (or until rice is tender), stirring occasionally and adding additional stock if needed. Stir in onion and pecan mixtures, mix well, and transfer to an oven proof baking dish. Place dish in preheated 375 degree oven and bake 10 minutes. Season to taste with additional salt and freshly ground pepper. Serve hot.

This hearty meal deserves a wine that is hearty without being too heavy. A good Bordeaux will complement the robust flavors of the game and wine sauces without competing with them. Or choose from one of the drier varieties, such as Pinot Noir, Cabernet, or Merlot.

A WILD GOOSECHASE

Strange Birds and Bedfellows

“The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle”

*There never was such a goose.
It was sufficient dinner for the whole family...the youngest
Cratchits in particular were steeped in sage and onion to the
eyebrows.*

Charles Dickens

Jewels have been hidden in some strange places by both nervous owners and fleeing thieves. Perhaps the strangest niche for a stolen jewel, however, is described by Conan Doyle.

In “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” we find our purloined gem tucked away in a very seasonal pocket -- the crop of “a most unimpeachable Christmas goose.” What endears us to this strangely named tale, after our initial relief that it isn’t about a great purple festering boil, are the three main characters, a very seedy and disreputable felt hat, our most unimpeachable Christmas goose, and a scintillating blue stone. For even though the goose is quite dead, it and its two costars assume a life of their own in this Conan Doyle tale.

Though it is shot through with humans who alternately rant, cower, gasp, and faint, these seem only props for the ultimate drama – the life and loves of hat, goose, and jewel. We open with our king of detectives lounging on a sofa dressed appropriately in a royal purple dressing gown as he illuminates some points “not entirely devoid of interest” about the hat. Is it in earnest or merely a cruel taunt when he lends Watson his lens and asks him to ponder the habits of the missing owner of such? Of course, our poor Watson fails miserably and tells Holmes he can see nothing.

How tragic if Holmes had lived today, when a police lab could lift a few hairs from battered felt and run a DNA match with 99.999999% probability. The poor detective would probably wind up in drug rehab if he’d been fated to live into our twenty-first century.

To Holmes the life history of the hat’s owner is “of course obvious.” Oh, how we love it when he demeans us with his casual superiority. It is here that we, the more sadistic of Doyle’s readers sometimes long for the occasional visit of Mycroft, Holmes’ older and smarter brother, to set the upstart on his head, showing these great deductive leaps from felt to fortune, hats to husbandry to be mere balderdash. But alas, and to our secret satisfaction, Holmes seldom if ever receives his rightful comeuppance.

As he explains his reasoning to Watson with an ease which marks all great thinkers, Holmes’ ideas are so clearly simple and logical that we smugly fool ourselves that we could, given a bit more time, have come to the same conclusions.

What has seemed only an intellectual exercise until now, finding the rightful owner of the battered hat, who had lost it and his Christmas goose in a street tussle with a band of roughs, takes a more sinister tone as Peterson, the commissionaire, enters. The ever- ripening fowl has gone to Peterson and his family to “fulfill the ultimate destiny of a goose,” as Holmes so delicately puts it. But in its crop, his wife has found something extraordinary, “a brilliantly scintillating blue stone, rather smaller than a bean in size, but of such purity and radiance that it twinkled like an electric point.” Holmes immediately recognizes the Countess of Morcar’s blue carbuncle and recounts its cursed and sordid life:

In spite of its youth, it has already a sinister history. There have been two murders, a vitriol-throwing, a suicide, and several robberies brought about for the sake of this forty-grain weight of crystallised charcoal.

Holmes and Watson must then leave the warm crackling fire of 221 B Baker Street and go out into the bitter night where “the stars were shining coldly in a cloudless sky, and the breath of passers-

by blew out into smoke like so many pistol shots.” Footfalls ring out and the tension builds with the staccato beat of sharp sounds that punctuate the darkness like shattered crystal falling from an ice palace.

In hot pursuit of the goose’s recent adventures, Watson and Holmes remind us of a pair of anxious parents tracking down the suspect friends of their rebellious teenager. At last, Holmes finds the culprit, and who can forget this sniveling little “shrimp” of a man with the cringing manner of Renfeild, Dracula’s vampire in training. You remember, the one who couldn’t even work up the gumption to suck human blood but smacked his lips over the dungeon spider population. Holmes doles out a lecture rather than Her Majesty’s justice to the groveling thief and sends him away.

Reaching for his clay pipe before his half apologetic explanation to Watson, Holmes almost shrugs, “I am not retained by the police to supply their deficiencies.” And they touch the bell to call forth Mrs. Hudson and their own dinner of roasted fowl. We can almost see Mrs. Hudson smoothing down her apron and pushing back a stray hair as she places the covered dish before her two favorite boarders.

Or perhaps, we are more comfortable in the cozy kitchen of Commissionaire Peterson, where he warms his feet in front of the open fire, pipe in hand as he chats with his wife. She nods and smiles as she deftly turns the white feathered goose into delectable country fare. We see her busy hands chop and dice and can almost smell the sweet herbs she has assembled for a stuffing. Now we sit in anticipation with this fine pair as we watch it brown ever so slowly over the open hearth.

Here is but one way “to fulfill the ultimate destiny of a goose.” Our menu includes *Roast Christmas Goose with Apricot-Port Glaze, Cracked Wheat and Apricot Stuffing, New Potatoes in a Lemon Chive Sauce, Cold Asparagus in Walnut Drizzle, and Watercress Fennel Salad with Tarragon-Rosemary Vinaigrette.*

*Judging from a remark of the Emperor Augustus -
that a certain task should be "done quicker than you could cook
asparagus" -
the Romans liked their asparagus barely blanched.*

Mimi Sheraton

Roast Christmas Goose with Apricot-Port Glaze

1 10-pound goose
1/2 cup butter
Salt and pepper
1 recipe cracked wheat and apricot stuffing
1 onion, quartered
1 1/2 cups beef broth
12 peach halves (canned)
2 tbsps cognac
2 tbsps orange liqueur

Singe and wipe the goose. Rub inside of goose with 2 tablespoons butter, softened. Season with salt and pepper. Fill neck and body cavity with stuffing. Fold neck skin over and secure with small skewer. Sew up body cavity, truss bird, prick skin all over with a fork. Spread with 1 tablespoon butter, softened, and butter roasting pan with 1 tablespoon butter. Place bird in pan with onion. Roast in preheated 400 oven for 30 minutes. Pour off fat, season with salt and pepper, and pour on port wine from soaked fruit in stuffing. Lower heat to 350 and roast... basting 3 or 4 times, for 1 1/2 hours or until legs move freely in their sockets. Keep bird warm. Remove fat from roasting pan, pour in beef broth, and simmer for 5 minutes on top of stove, scraping the pan of all brown particles. Meanwhile, melt remaining 4 tablespoons butter and sauté well-drained peach halves until golden. Carve goose; arrange peach halves around it. Add cognac and liqueur to sauce and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve in a sauceboat.

Cracked Wheat and Apricot Stuffing

1 pound dried apricots, pitted	1 tsp dried sage
1 cup tawny port wine	Salt and pepper
2 cups cracked wheat (bulghur)	1/2 pound dried prunes, pitted and halved
1/4 cup butter	1//3 cup pine nuts
2 medium onions, chopped	1 cup beef broth
2 celery stalks, finely diced	

Soak the apricots in the port overnight. Reserve port to baste bird. Soak the cracked wheat in 4 cups water for 2 hours. Drain well. Melt the butter and fry the onion and celery, add the well-drained cracked wheat and sauté for 5 minutes. Season with sage and salt and pepper to taste. Mix in prunes, pine nuts, drained apricots, and broth and simmer for 20 minutes.

New Potatoes in a Lemon Chive Sauce

12 (about 1 1/2 pounds) small new potatoes
1/3 cup butter or margarine
2 tablespoons minced chives
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper

Scrub or scrape potatoes and cook in boiling salted water for about 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Melt butter or margarine in a small saucepan. Stir in minced chives, lemon juice, lemon peel, salt and pepper. Drain potatoes and pour lemon-chive sauce over, turning to coat well.

Cold Asparagus in Walnut Drizzle

1 1/2 pounds fresh tender asparagus tips
1 cup finely chopped walnuts
1 to 2 tablespoons walnut or sesame oil
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1/4 cup soy sauce
1/3 cup sugar
Pepper

Cook asparagus in boiling water, covered, for 6 to 7 minutes or until just tender. Drain well and arrange in a serving dish. Mix remaining ingredients and pour over asparagus, lifting it so dressing penetrates. Sprinkle with pepper. Serve slightly chilled.

Watercress Fennel Salad with Tarragon-Rosemary Vinaigrette

The slight licorice tang of the fennel teams up with tarragon to give this salad a sweet piquancy.

1 bunch watercress
1 bunch fennel, thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
6 to 8 scallions, minced
4 shallots, minced
2 leeks, thinly sliced

1 sprig fresh rosemary
Several tender tips fresh tarragon
Salt and coarsely ground black pepper, to taste
9 tablespoons olive oil

1 1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
4 tablespoons red wine vinegar

Mix first 6 ingredients in a large salad bowl. Discard any woody parts of the rosemary stem and chop with the tarragon. Sprinkle over salad. Drizzle the olive oil over the salad and toss thoroughly to coat. Salt and pepper to taste.

Blend mustard and vinegar, stirring with a fork. Drizzle over salad and toss again.