

A Case of Identity

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson were discussing previous cases in their apartment on Baker Street. Suddenly, a visitor, Miss Mary Sutherland, walked through the door with a new case for Holmes to solve.

After Mary's father died, Mary's mother married a man by the name of James Windibank, who also happened to be only a few years older than Mary. The three of them lived together, but Mary didn't want to be a burden on her family. So, she let her mother and stepfather live off the inheritance that her Uncle Ned had left her. Mary supported herself with a humble income that she made from typing letters.

Windibank never allowed Mary to go to social events. However, he frequently took business trips. During one such trip, Mary attended a ball and met her eventual fiancé, Hosmer Angel. From then on, the couple continued their romance in secret. When Windibank was home, the couple communicated by writing letters. Curiously, Mr. Angel's letters were always typed, even his name. Soon enough, Angel proposed to Mary, and she accepted. But when their wedding day arrived, Angel had disappeared without a trace.

The next evening, there was a knock at Holmes's door. The visitor was James Windibank, whom Holmes had invited to the apartment with a letter.

Holmes explained that the typed letter of reply from Windibank had matching properties to those of the typed letters from Mr. Angel. Windibank tried to leave. "If you can catch the man, catch him, and let me know when you have done it," he said. Holmes then locked the door and said that he had already found him. Shocked, Windibank sat back down. Holmes explained that Windibank had disguised himself and posed as Mr. Angel. Mr. Angel's disappearance was planned to make sure that Mary would never get over her missing fiancé and wouldn't marry anyone else. That way, Windibank could still receive her inheritance money.

Windibank all but admitted his guilt, though he added that he had done nothing illegal and that he couldn't be arrested. Holmes unlocked the door, opened it, and then reached for his whip. Windibank wasted no time and scurried out of the apartment in fear. Watson asked Holmes if he planned on telling Mary the truth. Holmes replied that she would never believe him.