

Sherlock Holmes on Cape Cod

An account of the American trip of the great detective in the summer of 1912. Reported in the journal of Dr. Watson, as adapted by Bill Russo from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's enduring classics.

Published by CCA Media

January 1, 2017

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. All pictures are held by commercial license and may not be duplicated by anyone without express permission.

Smashwords Edition, License Notes

This ebook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This ebook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each recipient. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your enjoyment only, then please return to Smashwords.com or your favorite retailer and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

...

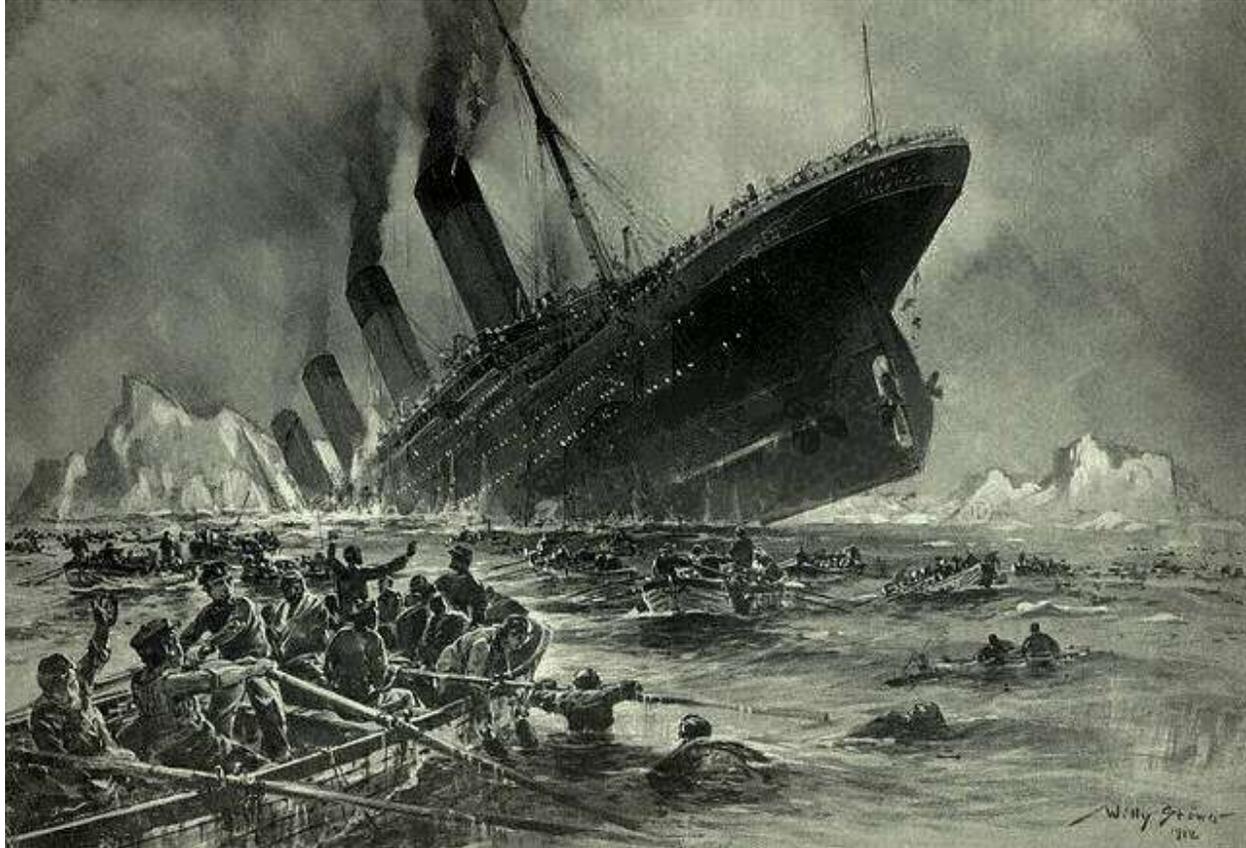
...

From the journal of Dr. John Hamish Watson – as adapted by Bill Russo

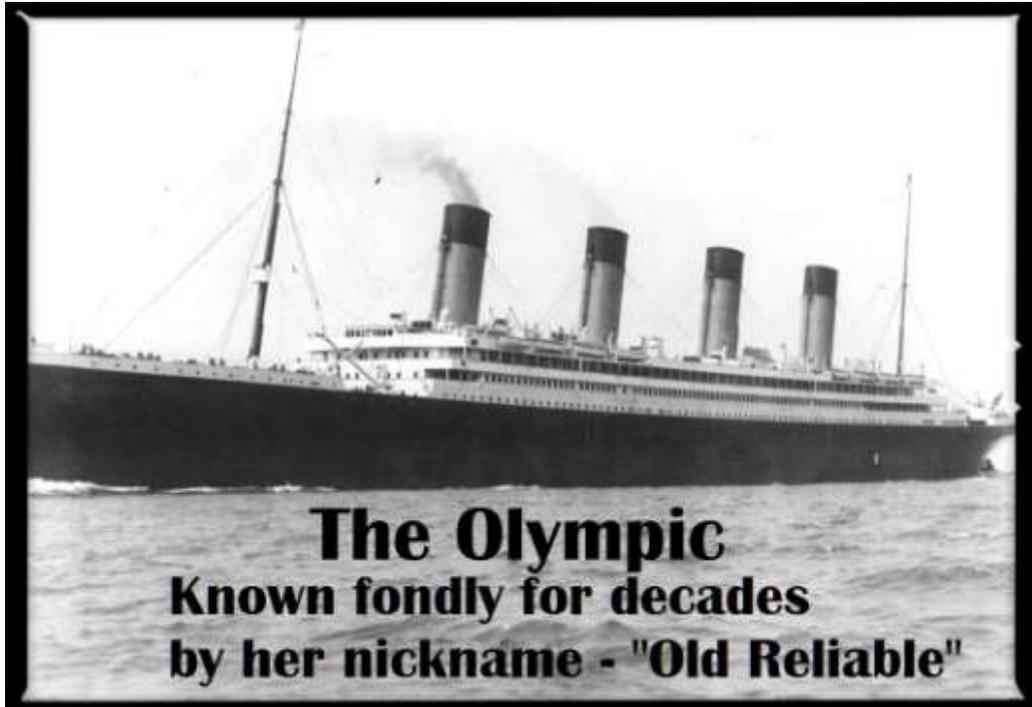
In the summer of 1912 Sherlock Holmes was devoting all of his energies to his retirement occupation of keeping his bees happy at his farm in Sussex. He hadn't so much as peered through a microscope in years, unless it was to examine the broken wing of a queen bee or some other such emergency in the hive.

My practice in London had grown so busy that I had three junior physicians working under me. We had opened a dispensary not far from the old flat at 221 B Baker Street, where we specialized in the care and treatment of Her Majesty's war veterans. Little did we know that we'd soon be needed more than ever as the planet was headed for an unprecedented Global War. But in that summer of the 12th year of the new century, there was little talk of anything other than the tragic sinking in April of the great British ship, the Titanic.

She sank on just the fourth day of her maiden voyage after being struck by an iceberg while enroute from Southampton to New York City. Of the 2200 people on board, less than 700 survived.



You can imagine then, my shock when I opened my morning mail and found two first class tickets to New York City on the Olympic, the Titanic's Sister Ship!



Just slightly smaller than the Titanic, the Olympic had been in service for over a year and was proving to be the finest luxury liner ever to fly the British flag. In future, during the 'Great War' she would volunteer for duty as a hospital ship and serve with distinction.

I do confess that I felt a little trepidation at the thought of a transatlantic crossing, just months after the catastrophe, but the letter that came with the tickets said that many lives were at stake. Not only that, it was reported to me in that correspondence, that Professor Moriarty had re-surfaced and was in the New England!

After reading that news, I knew I had to wrestle Holmes away from those little honey makers he was so fond of. I took the first train to Sussex. Just 50 minutes after leaving Victoria Station, I was transported on a fast buggy pulled by a team of twin bay mares and was at the great detective's front gate in another 20 minutes.

“Watson, my dear friend, it’s so good to see you. Come inside for a brandy and we’ll catch up!” he said as soon as he saw me.

We sat in a great dining hall at a table that could seat 12, but it didn’t take a great consulting detective to see that only one chair was regularly being occupied.

A neatly attired, attractive woman probably in her mid 50s or 60s served us our beverage along with a platter of chicken salad sandwiches and assorted sliced cheeses with olives and chips, freshly fried.

“It’s so nice to meet you Doctor Watson. Mr. Holmes talks of you all the time. I’m Mrs. Hammer. My aunt is your old friend Mrs. Hudson. She told me to make sure that Mr. Holmes doesn’t skip his meals, so I keep a close eye on him.”

“Be careful old fellow,” Holmes advised, “Hammer is her name and it is also what she does. If you don’t eat every single crumb of your sandwich you’ll see how much of a hammer she can be!”

The housekeeper laughed, said her goodbyes, and closed the dining room door leaving us to our private chat.

“So tell me Doctor, what brings you here? No, don’t tell me. Let’s see if I still have what it takes to be a consulting detective of the first rank.”

Holmes finished his sandwich, drained the last of his brandy and withdrew his famous curved pipe. Walking swiftly to a sideboard he filled it with an aromatic brand of tobacco, reminding me instantly of our many adventures of long ago.

Holmes sat back at the table and struck a match to light his pipe which soon began belching great clouds of fragrant smoke that circled his head.

“Ah now I am able to think in just the manner I did when we were the talk of London. I see that you are still working very hard Watson, but not especially hard at medicine. I suspect that you have some assistants now who do much of the actual ‘practice’ of medicine, while you are saddled with book keeping, collecting fees, and keeping up with the latest medical journals. It seems like you’re very prosperous too.”

“It’s true Holmes. I have three young physicians of the highest rank under me, an office full of nurses, and a secretary; but I have to handle the day to day affairs of the business. How did you know?”

“Elementary my dear Watson! You don’t have your stethoscope hanging round your neck and yet it’s obvious to me that you left your office in a hurry. If you’d been seeing patients there would be some tool of the trade on your person – but there is not. You’re wearing an expensive white shirt – I’ll wager it’s from Fenwick’s of Bond Street and set you back 14 pounds! Yet you have no necktie, meaning that you took off your tie to settle down to paperwork. You probably received some correspondence that has troubled you and you are here to consult me on a semi-professional basis!”

“You’re almost spot-on old friend. After all these years, I still don’t know how you do it. But you’re wrong on one point Holmes.”

“Which point is that, Doctor Watson?”

“I’m not here for myself. I’m here for a dozen people who have been murdered and for hundreds more who might be killed if Moriarty isn’t stopped!”

“Moriarty!” Holmes jerked backwards, stunned by the name of his worst enemy. “It cannot be. He’s finished. There is no more Moriarty. The Napoleon of Crime died, just as you wrote in your account, “The Final Problem”. He perished when we both plunged from the top of Reichenbach Falls.”

“My dear Holmes, in that story I also wrote that you died! You let the world believe for a time that you did indeed expire in the fall. Apparently Moriarty also survived. The letter I received this morning indicates that he did. Further, it states that he has moved his operations to America – specifically New England; or to be more exact a 64 mile long peninsula called Cape Cod! Here’s the letter Holmes, read it for yourself.”

The Russo Brothers

1734 Old Wharf Road

Dennis Port, Cape Cod

U.S.A.

July 19, 1912

Dear Doctor Watson,

Here in the United States we have long enjoyed your reports of the excellent work done by the famous consulting detective, Sherlock Holmes. As his valuable assistant, we are in hopes that you will contact him to assist the people of New England and indeed the whole world in a very important matter.

A strong-armed association calling itself The Codfish Benevolent Association (CBA) is poised to corner almost all of the Salt Cod exports of the United States. Headquartered here in Cape Cod, the CBA has already killed a dozen fishermen who refused to yield to their demands. They have forced all the seamen to sell their catch to them at a fraction of its true value. Once they have completed the takeover of all of the commercial wharves they will be able to demand exorbitant prices and will control a multi-billion dollar industry.

We are a group of six brothers whose interests are mainly in the steam fitting and construction business, but two of us are commercial fishermen. We are not afraid of a battle, but we have reliable information that the leader of the CBA is none other than Mr. Holmes' nemesis, Professor Moriarty. If this is true, and we believe it is, he will not stop with conquering the fishermen but will go on to other hateful schemes. He needs to be stopped before his operation spreads beyond the confines of Cape Cod.

Enclosed are two tickets for your passage to Boston as well as train tickets that will bring you to the Gray Gables railroad station, the welcome mat of Cape Cod. We'll meet you there Dr. Watson, and fill you in on more details. We will pay whatever fees and expenses necessary. Please phone me at Cape Cod 2177 to let me know if you and Mr. Homes will consent to help us and if you have any further questions.

Yours Sincerely,

Carmine Russo,

Head of the family Russo, after Papa.

...

“Do you know anything of these Russo people Watson?”

“Actually I do Holmes. They received a large amount of publicity last year when they captured the international criminal Cardenio Colucci.”

“Yes Watson I remember the case now. They grabbed him in an amusement park. He was carrying two suitcases which contained not clothing, but more than a million American dollars in cash!”

“His numerous businesses were about to fail Holmes, so he took all of the operating capital and tried to flee the country. He was wanted for a number of crimes in Italy as well as in the States. The Russo brothers earned rewards of almost 50,000 pounds for capturing the desperate fellow.”

“I think a little ocean voyage will be just the thing for me Watson. Mrs. Hammer and my staff can handle the bees. What about you? Are your people well enough trained to carry on without you for a month or two while we travel to the ‘new’ England!”

“Oh yes Holmes, I daresay, they’ll be glad to run on their own for a time. I probably watch them a little too closely you know. Detail Holmes. Detail. As I learned from you, always pay attention to the details!”

“Very good Watson. Let’s go straightaway to the pier and get on our ship.”

“Just a minute Holmes! There’s a little detail that I omitted to think about. I forgot the tickets, they are back at my office.”

“Watson how could you? With perhaps the fate of the whole world in.....”

“Just kidding Holmes. I just wanted to get a little rise out of you. Let’s go old fellow!”

**WHITE
STAR
LINE.**

**"OLYMPIC."
45,000 TONS.
AND
"TITANIC."
45,000 TONS.
THE LARGEST STEAMERS
IN THE WORLD.**

ALL STEAMERS BUILT IN IRELAND.

QUEENSTOWN-NEW YORK
ON THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS.

QUEENSTOWN-BOSTON
ON WEDNESDAYS.

For Freight and Passage apply to

JOHN DENNEHY,
Insurance Agent, CAHIRCIVEEN, Co. Kerry

Watson and Holmes enjoyed favorable weather and a calm ocean in their seven day cruise aboard the world's largest luxury liner. The first class cabins were expansive and had private bathrooms. They took some of their meals in the main dining room and others in the more intimate A La Carte restaurant.

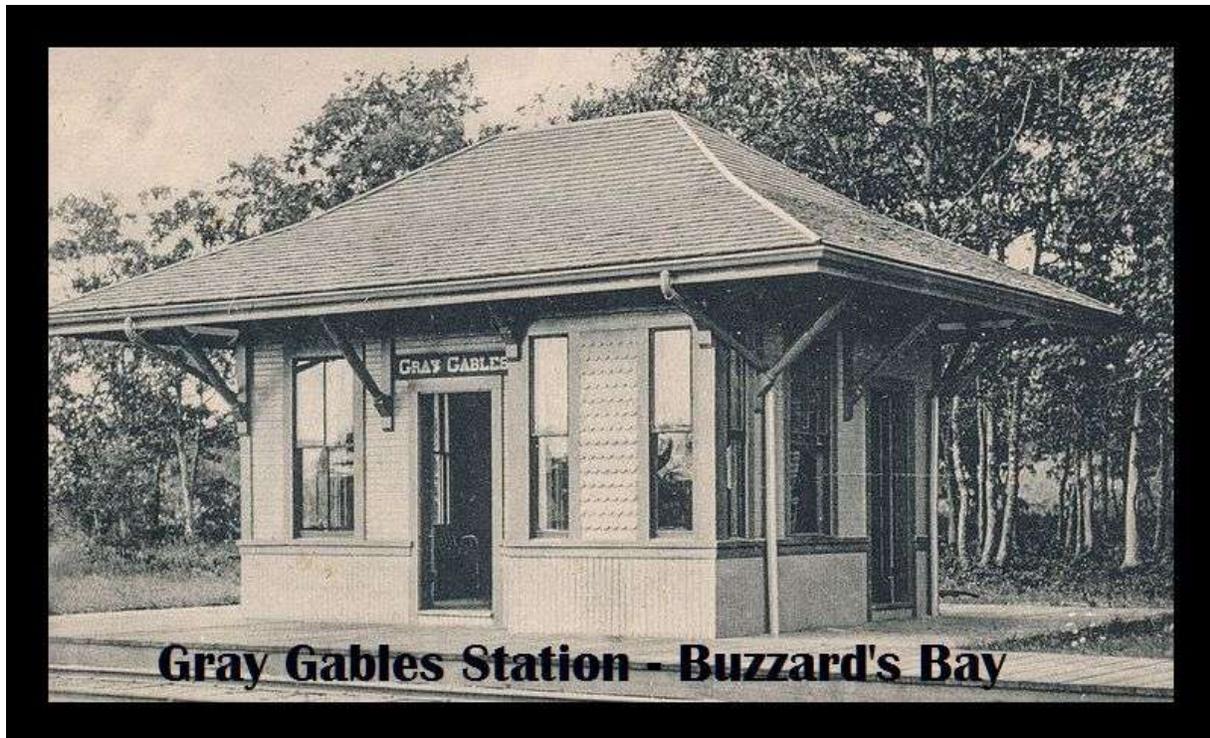
There were a number of elevators on board (called 'lifts' by Holmes and Watson). Other amenities included a swimming pool, a Turkish bath, a smoking room in Georgian style, a Veranda Café decorated with palm trees, and a gymnasium. Holmes frequented the Café and the smoking room regularly but disdained the gymnasium.

From Boston they boarded a train to Taunton where they changed to the Cape Cod line which ran all the way to Provincetown. Holmes became more animated and excited as each mile passed. Finally when the conductor called 'Gray Gables – next stop Gray Gables', he could take the inactivity no more. Rising from his seat, he began pacing back and forth in the coach to the chagrin of a few of the passengers that he nearly bumped into as they began to leave their seats and stand next to the exit doors.

"Holmes sit down a minute please before you get the entire train agitated."

"You're right of course, Watson. It's just that I can feel it in my bones. The game is afoot and it's been a long time between skirmishes for me. I can hardly contain myself Watson. Moriarty is close by, I can feel it."

Cape Cod Engine Number Two slowly ground to a noisy halt and Holmes and Watson fairly dashed down the three steps to the platform where they were greeted a rough looking group that they both hoped were the Russo Brothers.



A large man, close to six feet tall, with the build of a circus strongman stepped from the crowd and began walking toward Holmes and Watson. His head looked as smooth and slick as an artillery shell and his face seemed to be cut from steel. He was clean shaven with a jaw that could have been pulled from the handle of a sledgehammer.

"I'm Lucciano Russo, call me Lucca. I'll be your bodyguard while you are here Mr. Holmes and yours too Dr. Watson," he announced. "Please come with me and meet my brothers."

A stern looking man with black curly hair and a well trimmed beard and mustache stepped up to join Holmes, Watson, and Lucca.

"I am Carmine Russo, oldest brother at 32, and head of the family after papa. It was me who wrote to you Mr. Holmes. We need your help really bad. Let me introduce you to my brothers then we can talk about the trouble.

“Lucca, the second oldest you already met. He was a sparring partner for the Living Giant, Jess Willard – the world’s greatest boxer. Lucca will accompany you and Doctor Watson everywhere. There is no trouble he cannot handle. The next oldest is Billy, who is 28. When he had “Second Sight” he was known as Cape Cod’s Figure in Black. It was him who led us to Carmine Collucci. He was a crook with a high reward on his head. You might have heard about that.”

“As a matter of fact, Watson and I were talking about that very thing while we were on the train. I was wondering why your ‘Figure in Black’ hasn’t been able to lead you to Moriarty.”

“Well Mr. Holmes,” Carmine answered, “It’s because he had a brain injury that gave him the second sight. But when he got better, he lost the special powers and abilities that he had.”

“Well Mr. Russo I’m happy that you’re healed,” Holmes replied, but in dealing with Moriarty we certainly could have used your powers of divination.”

“The other three brothers are Tony Jr, Bartolomeo, and Giovanni. Gio is an artist and he has drawn a sketch of what he thinks Moriarty looks like, based on descriptions given to him by the few who have actually seen the Professor.”

“Excellent,” said Holmes, “Let me see the drawing. I want to be sure that it is Moriarty we are after.”

Gio reached into his pocket and withdrew a piece of paper. He unfolded it and handed it to the great detective.

“It’s brilliant Gio!” raved Holmes. “That’s Moriarty for certain. You’ve captured his face perfectly and you’ve got him wearing the clothes he always appears in, the long coat and hat. Excellent work. Now take me to the men who gave you the details for this picture.”

“We can’t do that Mr. Holmes,” Carmine answered.

“Because anyone who has ever seen Moriarty is dead,” added Gio. “With their dying breath they gave me the details of his appearance.”



Drawing of Professor Moriarty - 1912

“Gentlemen, I swear to you that with your help, Dr. Watson and I will put an end to this madman’s reign of terror and murder. Now tell me why we are gathered here at Gray Gables – it’s not really Cape Cod.”

“Correct Mr. Holmes,” agreed Carmine, “but Gray Gables is often called the Welcome Mat to Cape Cod. The reason we are here is because since we wrote you, Moriarty has expanded his base of operations. A week ago, his henchmen had secured all 15 commercial wharves on Cape Cod. Since that time, they have also captured the wharves of the whaling cities of Fall River and New Bedford.”

“That’s the bad news Mr. Holmes,” said Billy. “It’s also good news in a sense because they now control about 85 per cent of the seafood market.”

“How can that be good news?” wondered Dr. Watson.

“Well Doctor, you’re right of course. It’s not really good news, but what I mean is that the 15 towns of Cape Cod and the cities of Fall River and New Bedford constitute almost the entire value of the Massachusetts seafood market. The catch from Boston and Gloucester and other towns some 150 miles from here are small in comparison. It’s likely that Moriarty will not expand beyond the present territory. So if we are going to catch him, it will be either in one of the 15 towns of Cape Cod or in Fall River or New Bedford.”

“So you think that he will not expand into Boston or the towns north of the city?” questioned Holmes.

“It’s unlikely Mr. Holmes. Boston is a large seaport and trade in hard-goods is significant but its seafood catch is small.”

Homes rubbed his hands together as if so doing would kindle an idea in his head that would start the adventure.

“Gentlemen, if I understand the situation correctly, it is likely that Moriarty is either in one of the fifteen towns of Cape Cod or he’s in Fall River or New Bedford.”

“No there’s another place he could be,” said Carmine. He might be where the fishes are.”

“Where would that be? In the water I presume,” suggested Dr. Watson.

“Yes the water Doctor, but not in all of the water,” advised Meo. “Billy and I are the fishermen of the family and we can tell you from long years of experience that the catch in the waters along the shoreline is fairly small. The real concentration of fish is in a place called George’s Bank. It’s a shallow fishing grounds about 100 miles east of Cape Cod. Fishermen from as far as Newfoundland gather there because it has such a high concentration of fish stock.”

“There are so many fishing boats in George’s Bank you could almost walk a mile from ship to ship and never get your feet wet!” added Billy. “It’s possible that he could be running the operation from a boat in the bank.”

“I don’t think so,” offered Holmes. “He would be at a disadvantage there. Not all the boats would be Cape Cod boats. He would need to be close to the wharves to properly control the mayhem. He’d want to be no more than a few minutes away from the action. Please now, tell me how he manages to take over a wharf.”

“Well, said Carmine, “he brings a gang of armed thugs to the wharf and as soon as a boat comes in, they board it like pirates and start roughing up the captain and crew until they agree to sign over their catch for pennies on the dollar. Those that don’t go along are brutally murdered. In the beginning quite a few men fought back – they are all dead. Nobody’s fighting back now, they’re too scared. Moriarty has a gang of between ten and twenty men staged in each town. So altogether he’s got a small army of about 300 of the toughest thugs and killers in the entire country.”

“What about your police?” wondered Watson. “Why haven’t they gotten involved?”

“They did get involved in the beginning,” said Carmine. “But since the first few killings, no one has dared to file a complaint. On top of that all of the fishermen have signed the paperwork that Moriarty forced on them. The papers state that they have joined the CBA of their own free will and that they have agreed to only sell their catch to the CBA.”

“Yes,” said Holmes, “That’s the way the diabolical Moriarty likes to work. He enjoys having a veneer of legality surrounding his mayhem. The next thing I need to know gentlemen is how the Salt Cod market functions. Tell me all about the operation from hooking the fish to barreling the catch for sale and shipping.”

“Billy and Meo can explain that,” said Carmine.

“The fishing business is changing Mr. Holmes. It’s been kind of a family business for thousands of years,” said Bartolomeo, (nicknamed Meo and pronounced mayo). Up until six years ago all fish were caught the way they have always been landed, by the use of a hook and a line. But in 1906 steam powered trawlers began appearing. They scrape the bottom of the ocean with nets and gather up everything that’s down there. One single trawler can out-fish 50 sailing vessels. But the trawlers also do horrible damage to the ocean floor. They should be outlawed, but they won’t be. Moriarty knows that trawlers are the future of fishing and he wants to get in right now, on the ground floor.”

“We still fish the traditional way,” said Billy. “We have three men in a boat, using fishing line and a hook. Here’s a picture that Gio drew of the process. You’ll see that one of us stands at the rail of the boat with the baited line with two hooks on it. The second man stands by with a gaff to help get the fish into the boat. Some Codfish weigh a hundred pounds or more – but every year we get fewer big ones due to the overfishing by the trawlers. The third man in the drawing is preparing the fish for salting. If we’re going to be out for less than a day, we don’t salt them. They can either be sold fresh or they can be put on racks and preserved by drying. If we’re going to be out more than a day, we have to preserve them by salting them right on board. We have to bring hundreds and hundreds of pounds of salt with us.”

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

