

Stoke Moran House
Stoke Moran
Surrey

37 Baker Street
London

13th January 1883

Dear Mr Holmes,

I am writing to you because I need to inform you of my current situation. It is of utmost importance that you read this, as I fear if you do not, I may be dead! This letter comes at the recommendation of a dear friend, Mrs Farintosh, who came to you regarding a missing Opal Tiara.

I live with Dr Roylott, a violent man, and one who beat his butler to death. He is locally known to all, and often abuses his strength with me, and my late sister, Julia Stoner. He forces us to do the work in the house, because no maid nor butler would be resilient enough to stay in this hell-hole. He has a strong liking for exotic animals, and keeps a cheetah and a baboon, which terrorise the estate, so we often have to lock our doors, just for a sense of security! He owes a debt, a terrible one, and has to pay £250 once one of us gets married.

My late sister Julia was engaged, but the night before her marriage, she heard a long, low whistle, and smelled Indian cigars, so she travelled to my bedchamber and we talked for hours, and then she went back to hers. Not a few moments later, I heard a scream and a shout, metal clanging, and a long low whistle. I rushed to her room where she was kneeling on the floor, crying and screaming. She looked haggard, cold. She had the dying illusion of a band, a speckled band, and pointed to my stepfather's room, and I called him, him having a bottle of whiskey. Finally, she collapsed with not a mark of violence, or a trace of poison with her.

I have been repositioned to my sister's room, for mine is under construction. I have been hearing a long, low whistle, the ballad of my sister's very own death, and so I stand, begging you for help, as this matter is well out of my hands in preventing death. Please do come, or I may share the same fate as my sister, and join her hand in death!

Yours sincerely,

Miss Helen Stoner