

The Baker Street Kids

THE CASE OF THE NEWGATE BREAKOUT

**A Sherlock Holmes Mystery
in Two Acts for Youth Groups**

By Dave Buchanan

Spotlight Publications

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The Baker Street Kids

THE CASE OF THE NEWGATE BREAKOUT

CAST

Sherlock Holmes	Sean Barrett
Doctor Watson	Professor Moriarty
Mrs Hudson	

The Kids:

Wiggins	Alice
Smiler	Liza
Badger	Lily
Benjie	Mary
Sammy	Maggie

Setting - A split set: Holmes's lodgings R, the kids' den L
Paddington & Euston Railway Stations. The exterior wall of Newgate Prison
Time - Victorian London, 1890, midsummer

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT 1

Prologue - front of tabs
Scene 1 - Paddington Station
Scene 2 - Sherlock Holmes's sitting room
Scene 3 - front of tabs
Scene 4 - the kids' den
Scene 5 - Paddington Station
Scene 6 - Euston Station
Scene 7 - the kids' den
Scene 8 - Paddington Station

ACT 2

Scene 1 - Holmes's sitting room
Scene 2 - a street outside Holmes's flat
Scene 3 - the kids' den
Scene 4 - outside Newgate Prison
Scene 5 - same as Scene 4
Scene 6 - Holmes's sitting room
Scene 7 - a room in a derelict building
Scene 8 - the same as Scene 7
Scene 9 - Holmes's sitting room

THE CHARACTERS

Sherlock Holmes - The great detective, master of disguise and deductive reasoning.

Doctor Watson - Holmes's colleague, and narrator, loyal and plodding.

Mrs Hudson - The housekeeper, fussy and bustling.

Sean Barrett - Member of the IRB, young (twenties).

Professor Moriarty - Arch villain, Holmes's opponent.

The Boys

Wiggins - The leader & organiser, resourceful and likeable.

Badger & Smiler - The backbone of the gang, typically boyish.

Sammy - A food fanatic.

Benjie - A bit of a loner and moody.

The Girls

Alice - The leader, streetwise and feisty.

Liza - Second-in-command, a bit headstrong but genuine.

Lily & Mary - Backbone of the girls' gang.

Maggie - The youngest, eight years old.

ACT 1

THE CASE OF THE NEWGATE BREAKOUT

There are two scenes set upstage:

R is Holmes's sitting room, which is minimal, with some period furniture, perhaps a table and two small chairs, and an armchair. A newspaper on the table

L is the kids' den. There are a number of packing cases in the background, and some boxes for use as seats

Downstage should be kept clear for the various other scenes. Tabs may be used as required, or simple front lighting. Two large signs reading "Euston Station" and "Paddington Station" are required. See Production Notes page 38

Prologue

A spotlight DR, in it Dr Watson, with a book in his hand

Watson This is an extract from the journals of yours truly John Watson MD, being an account of the extraordinary sequence of events which I have designated 'The Case Of The Newgate Breakout'. The first scene takes place in the bustling railway station of Paddington ...

The spot fades on Watson and lights come up on the tabs. There is a large sign with the legend "GWR Paddington"

Scene 1

Paddington Station

Wiggins is C. He is wearing a maroon jacket and has a shoeblick kit, and a box

He is touting for business

Wiggins Come on, gents, roll up, roll up. Get yer shoes blacked. Best and cheapest in London. An amazing bargain at one penny a go. I ask yer, gents, where will you get anything as good? Roll up!

A gentleman passes from R to L, sporting a large handlebar moustache

Shine yer shoes, sir?

The gentleman stops and places his left shoe on the box

(Starts applying the polish) Yes sir, right away, sir. Best shoeshine in London.

Gentleman Just get on with it.

Wiggins Yes sir, no trouble. *(Starts shining the shoes)* Look at that, sir. Guarantee you can see yer own face in the shoe, it's so shiny. And only one penny. Wot a bargain.

Gentleman I could've got it cheaper on Platform 2.

Wiggins *(taken aback)* Wot do you mean, cheaper?

Gentleman Just what I said. A boy on Platform 2 was doing it for three-farthings. He's undercutting you.

Wiggins looks closer at the gentleman

Wiggins 'Ere, wait a minute ... It's you, isn't it? Mr 'Olmes. You're 'avin' me on, aint'cha?

Holmes (*putting a finger to his lips*) Indeed, Wiggins, it is I. But don't let on.
Wiggins Are you on a job? Pursuing a villain?
Holmes In a sort of way. But I've got a job for you and your footsoldiers.
Wiggins Oh yeh? Wot job?
Holmes Bring them to Baker Street. I need the full complement.
Wiggins Full wot?
Holmes The full dozen. Can you make it for midday? That's ... (*Looks at his watch*) in three and a half hours' time.
Wiggins Yeh, I reckon I could, guv'.
Holmes (*handing him a coin*) Here. Tell them the usual rates. And a glass of lemonade for gratis.
Wiggins (*with a twinkle in his eye*) Sorry, guv', Gratis can't come today!

Holmes exits L. Wiggins picks up his gear and follows

Scene 2

Holmes's lodgings at 221b Baker Street, Marylebone, as described on page 1

Dr Watson is asleep on the armchair when there is a knock at the door. He stirs

Enter Mrs Hudson, the landlady

Watson Ah, Mrs Hudson, what is it?
Mrs Hudson It's them scruffs again, Doctor. Shall I let them in?
Watson Scruffs?
Mrs Hudson Yeh, the scruffy kids Mr 'Olmes calls the Regulators or somethink.
Watson The Irregulars!
Mrs Hudson That's them. Looks like none of 'em's washed in a week. Shall I send them in?
Watson Yes please, Mrs Hudson.
Mrs Hudson Shall I bring some lemonade for the little darlings?
Watson That would be first-class, Mrs Hudson.

Mrs Hudson exits. Watson goes upstage R as if to exit, then apparently sees someone coming and stops

Ah there you are, Holmes.

Sherlock Holmes enter UR and walks past Watson

Holmes So, Watson, have our little bunch of irregulars arrived then?
Watson Indeed they have. Mrs Hudson is just ...

At this precise moment Mrs Hudson enters R, ushering in the kids. They are all present and come in rather shambolically. The boys come in first followed by the girls

Holmes Welcome, young ladies and gentlemen. Mrs Hudson, would you be so good ... ?
Mrs Hudson The lemonade's already poured, Mr 'Olmes.
Holmes Excellent.

Mrs Hudson exits

Now then, let me see if I can remember some names. Wiggins of course I know, and the youngest lady, (*he looks at Maggie*) let me see now, is called Maggie.

Maggie smiles and blushes at this

Alice steps forward

Alice I'll introduce 'em if you like, Mr 'Olmes, starting with myself. *(She curtseys)* Alice, at your service.
(Turning to the others) This is Liza, Lily, Mary and, you know Maggie.

The girls smile and follow Alice's lead in curtseying

She looks at the boys

And this lot are Wiggy, Smiler, Badger, Sammy, and that one there's Benjie.

The boys don't smile and react in various of scowling and making faces. Sammy sticks out his tongue, and Alice replies in kind

Holmes I shall try and remember. *(Looks offstage R)* Ah the refreshments.

Mrs Hudson comes on with a large tray, on it a large jug of lemonade and a dozen glasses. She puts the tray down on the table and proceeds to hand them out. The kids drink greedily and with great satisfaction

Mrs Hudson smacks the fingers of any forward kids

Mrs Hudson Well! You'd think they'd never seen lemonade before!

Watson *(to the kids)* What about a 'thank you' then, children, for Mrs Hudson?

The kids mumble a 'Thanks, Mrs Hudson'

Mrs Hudson I should think so, too! Well then, I'm off.

She exits

The Baker Street Kids

The Case of the Newgate Breakout is an original adventure story based on Conan Doyle's stories of Sherlock Holmes. It features a gang of boys and girls known as *The Baker Street Irregulars*, who assist the great detective in thwarting a plot to bomb Newgate Prison.

The kids are detailed to keep a lookout for a bomber at Paddington Station, but things go seriously wrong when one of them is attacked and another, an 8 year-old girl, is kidnapped.

The play which is for a mixed cast of 11-15 year-olds and has fifteen parts, is ideal for schools. It is technically demanding, but full of comic and suspenseful moments, and guaranteed to thrill and amuse.

Running time 65 minutes.