

# **The Real McCoy**

**A comedy mystery  
in one act**

**by Dave Buchanan**

**Spotlight Publications**

COPYRIGHT © DAVE BUCHANAN 2006  
Published by Spotlight Publications

All rights are reserved including performances on stage, radio and television. **No part of this publication may be reproduced by photocopying or any other means without the prior permission of the copyright owner.** It is an infringement of the copyright to give any performance or public reading of the play before a licence has been issued.

Spotlight plays must be done as per the script, and without alterations, additions or cuts, except by written permission of the author. However minor changes such as the addition of local references are permitted.

Drama groups must obtain a full acting set of scripts (a minimum of one script per actor plus one for the director) before a performing licence can be issued.

The name of the author shall be stated on all publicity including posters and programmes. Programme credits shall state "script provided by Spotlight Publications".

All enquiries to Spotlight Publications, 259 The Moorings, Dalgety Bay, Fife, KY11 9GX, tel. 01383 825737.

**Email:** [enquiries@spotlightpublications.com](mailto:enquiries@spotlightpublications.com)  
**Website:** [www.spotlightpublications.com](http://www.spotlightpublications.com)

## **The Real McCoy**

CAST (in order of appearance)

**Henry Coombes/Sherlock Holmes**, 50s

**George Watts/Doctor Watson**, 50s

**The Vicar**, 40-50

**Ellen Kenworthy**, the daughter, 35-45

**Sangster**, the business partner, 60s

**Mary**, the widow, 60s

**Wiggins**, the street urchin, 10

Setting - London, a sitting room

Time - the present, in midsummer

### **SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

**Scene 1** - the sitting room of a modern house

**Scene 2** - Holmes & Watson's lodgings in Baker Street

**Scene 3** - an interview room at Scotland Yard

**Scene 4** - front of stage

**Scene 5** - as Scene 1

## Scene 1

*It is midsummer, one p.m.*

*The setting is the sitting-room of a modern house. The décor is restrained, but well-to-do. CR is a coffee table with a settee above it. A sideboard or bookcase UR with ornaments, including an urn, and a picture above it. UL are patio doors with an area of decking visible; on the decking, some pot plants. Magazines and a bowl of peanuts on the table*

*George Watts, dressed in a dark suit, emerges from R with a glass in his hand, looks round and sips from the glass. Then he takes some peanuts and looks anxiously off L. Decisively he places the glass on the table, crosses to L and exits*

*The Vicar, in grey suit and dog-collar, enters R with a glass of whisky in his hand and looks round. Seeing no one in the room, he gulps down the whisky greedily. He takes out a packet of cigarettes, then exits UL through the patio doors*

*Ellen Kenworthy, also wearing sombre clothes and with a handbag and a glass in her hand, enters by the door R, and walks to C sipping from the glass. She puts the glass on the table then takes out a cigarette packet and looks at it nervously*

*Sangster, who is dressed all in black and dark glasses, enters by the door R (with a glass). The two of them shift uneasily away, barely nodding and respecting each other's space*

*Henry Coombes (in a dark suit) enters by the door R with glass in hand, and after glancing at his companions, neither of whom he apparently knows, stands upstage of them half-smiling at them and giving the barest of nods*

*Ellen takes out her cigarette packet again and exits through the patio doors. Sangster immediately exits R. Henry reacts by shrugging his shoulders in a was-it-something-I-said? gesture. He drinks deeply from his glass. Then he sits on the settee and flicks through a magazine*

*We hear a toilet flush, then George emerges L from the bathroom, and picks up his glass from the table*

**George** By heck I was needing that, Henry.

**Henry** Did we really need to know, George?

*Pause*

**George** Good do. (*Sits with Henry*)

**Henry** Eh?

**George** The - you know.

**Henry** Oh. (*Pause*) What's good about it? Not a lot of laughs.

**George** I know that, but it's good. You know, good company, smoked salmon sarnies, free drink -

**Henry** Yeah, there's always that.

**George** In a way, we *are* celebrating -

**Henry** Celebrating what?

**George** (*shrugs*) The life of the deceased.

**Henry** Old Martin? Pity he's not around to celebrate with us. Martin's celebrating days are over. He's gone to that great celebration-free place in the sky.

*They sigh almost in synch*

**George** I suppose we're celebrating being alive.

**Henry** Damned right we are. I'll drink to that.

*They toast glasses*

**George** Did you know Jack Fellowes died last week? *(Rises)*

**Henry** Ohmygod. *(Rises)*

**George** Fifty four. Choked to death. Fishbone stuck in his gullet.

**Henry** Ohmygod.

*They both swig their glasses, then move downstage*

**George** Martin was sixty one, wasn't he?

**Henry** Thereabouts. You know, George, you hear people say, "It'll never happen to me, I could just as easily fall off a ladder". And blow me, that's exactly what Martin did.

**George** Yeah. Heart attack, lost his balance, fell off a ladder, cracked his skull on a paving slab. No more Martin.

**Henry** And I'm thinking, did we ever really know him?

**George** Course we did. Played golf with him for the past three years.

**Henry** Yeah, I know we did -

**George** Played bridge in the clubhouse with him. He was good at bridge and golf - bit of a bandit - drove a BMW -

**Henry** A *new* BMW every year. He knew how to impress.

**George** I know what you mean, Henry. We didn't actually know much about him. He never mentioned his wife and kids, though obviously he had both, 'cause we saw them in the chapel today.

**Henry** And what was his job? He never mentioned that.

**George** The Vicar said he was an *entrepreneur* - whatever that is -

**Henry** Could mean anything.

**George** Bit of a mystery man, our Martin.

*Pause*

I wonder if he went up or down?

**Henry** You what?

**George** You know - *(gestures)* up or - *(points down)*

**Henry** The latter, I think.

**George** Poor Martin. Suffering hellfire and damnation.

**Henry** Maybe. But one thing's for sure. He won't be lacking for company! If he's gone down.

**George** Yeah, half the bloody golf club'll be there for starters!

*They laugh*

**Henry** Well, it's time to go and rejoin the other mourners.

**George** You mean, get a refill?

*They both laugh as Henry exits R*

*George takes a peanut and sits as the Vicar enters UL through the patio doors with a packet of cigarettes in his hand*

**Vicar** Hello there.

**George** Oh hello, Vicar. *(Rises)*

**Vicar** Little weakness of mine.

**George** What?

**Vicar** *(indicating the packet)* The dreaded weed.

**George** Oh.

**Vicar** I've tried to give up but -

**George** The flesh is weak?

**Vicar** Precisely. I'll give up one day. Just the sight of a cigarette packet these days is enough to put -  
**George** The fear of God in you?  
**Vicar** I was going to say, the wind up. (*Moves DL*)

*Pause*

**George** I liked your speech. (*Moves DC*)  
**Vicar** What?  
**George** Your speech today. At the chapel.  
**Vicar** You mean the eulogy.  
**George** The what?  
**Vicar** Eulogy. A speech in praise of the dead.  
**George** Oh. Anyway, it was good. What you said about Martin.  
**Vicar** *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*  
**George** You've got me now.  
**Vicar** 'Speak nought but good of the dead'.  
**George** Oh I see, Latin.

*Pause*

I was just saying to my friend Henry, that we didn't really know Martin. You obviously know a lot more about him than we do.  
**Vicar** Not really.  
**George** You must have known him well. Going by what you said in the - eulogy?  
**Vicar** I didn't know him at all. Never met him, in fact.  
**George** Then how -  
**Vicar** The widow provided the information. You see, Mr -  
**George** Watts. George Watts. Call me George.  
**Vicar** You see, George, I'm employed by Sunset Fields Chapel of Rest. I've done three services today already. I've another two later on.  
**George** Blimey, it's almost like a conveyor belt.  
**Vicar** You could say that. But even though I didn't know the deceased, I still feel I'm providing a valuable service. It's the presence of the church, you see.  
**George** Oh yes?  
**Vicar** Yes. You see, George, people feel greatly comforted. At a time of stress they need something.  
(*Laughs*) Like a good stiff drink, for example!  
**George** Or a cigarette?  
**Vicar** Yes, quite.  
**George** But it was a good eulogy, I must admit.  
**Vicar** Thank you. Now I must get back.  
**George** I'll come with you. (*Motions*) After you.  
**Vicar** (*motions*) No, after you.

*George exits R followed by the Vicar*

*Ellen enters through the patio doors. She picks up her glass from the table and moves to DL, fidgeting nervously*

*Henry enters R with a full glass, sits on the settee and picks up a magazine*

*He notices Ellen*

**Henry** Good do.  
**Ellen** Pardon?  
**Henry** Do, get-together, shindig. As in social function after funeral.  
**Ellen** (*Australian accent*) Oh wake, mate! That's what you mean, the wake.

**Henry** (*rising and pointing*) You're - don't tell me - Australian.

**Ellen** Well spotted, mate.

**Henry** It's the Strine.

**Ellen** Strain? Yeh I know, mate, everyone's under a lot of strain.

**Henry** No no, Strine. You know, Australian twang. You've got it.

**Ellen** Yeh well, I would, mate, coming from Brisbane.

*Pause, during which they both sip from their glasses*

Lepers.

**Henry** I beg your pardon?

**Ellen** Lepers. They treat us like lepers, mate.

**Henry** Do they really?

**Ellen** We're a dying breed, you know. Smokers.

**Henry** That's for sure.

**Ellen** I blame the Yanks.

**Henry** Oh yes?

**Ellen** The States, Ireland, Scotland - next year Australia.. Mark my words, mate.

*Pause*

**Henry** Did you know him well?

**Ellen** What?

**Henry** Martin. Did you know him well?

**Ellen** Yeh.

*Pause*

Well, on and off, like.

*Pause*

I'm his daughter Ellen.

**Henry** Oh really? I didn't know. I mean, I didn't know he had a daughter.

**Ellen** Well, I haven't seen him since I was seven years old.

**Henry** That's amazing. I only found out today that he'd been in Australia.

**Ellen** What I said's not strictly true. I actually met him again last week. Just before he died.

**Henry** That was nice. - not that he died, of course. I meant it was nice that you met him again. After all these years.

**Ellen** No, it wasn't. I hated the bastard.

**Henry** Oh.

## **The Real McCoy**

### **Plot Summary**

While attending a wake for mild-mannered Martin McCoy, Henry and George discover that the deceased died in mysterious circumstances, and that his life had been threatened by his daughter, his business partner and his wife. In an extended fantasy sequence, Henry imagines how Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson might have investigated the case. Holmes duly and with great panache finds out who 'murdered' Martin!

Duration: approx. 35 minutes

ISBN 1 904930 52 2