

Female Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson Performers
The Original Baker Street Babes
by
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Part Two

Pearl White (1889 - 1938) starred in "Homlock Shermes" (1913).

"Pearl, the girl detective, is at home chafing with inactivity and the want of something to do. She decides to go out for a walk in the hope that something in the way of an adventure may come her way. Fred Hanley, a young man, has become a confirmed drunkard. A friend of his brings a doctor to visit Hanley. Hanley becomes excited during their visit and frightens them nearly unto death by shooting at them with a revolver. They leave in haste, but decide to lock Hanley in his room. This they do, leaving a servant to watch the door. Hanley, crazed for want of drink, writes a note that he is wrongfully imprisoned, and



offers \$5,000 reward for anyone who liberates him. This he throws out the window, just as Pearl is passing the house. She picks it up, reads it and realizes that her quest for an adventure has borne fruit. She immediately goes home and disguises as a boy. Coming back, she applies for a job and the woman downstairs employs her and puts the supposed boy to work. Pearl has a hard time of it, peeling potatoes and scrubbing floors, but with never a chance to liberate the

unfortunate, supposed prisoner. Later, however, she is caught upstairs listening at the door by the servant, and is kicked downstairs. The woman pulls her ears for leaving the kitchen, and all in all, Pearl is treated exactly how a real detective should not be. However, at last, Pearl succeeds in gaining access to the room and is fondly dreaming of the five thousand dollar reward and her noble work and bravery, when Hanley's friends enter and explain. Pearl appreciates that she has been stung and beats a hasty retreat, resolving to detect in a more profitable way in the hereafter.”¹

Bliss Milford starred as Sally in “The Sherlock Holmes Girl” (1914). A small town girl, from Hope, North Dakota, Bliss Milford was known for her versatility, but “The Sherlock Holmes Girl” helped prove comedy was her forte.



"The Sherlock Holmes Girl" - (Edison) - "Sally was the maid-of-all-work at the Palace Hotel, Jonesville. Sally's raise to fame was occasioned solely because some absent-minded guest had left a book behind him, when he departed from the somewhat limited splendors of the Palace hotel. The book was a treatise on the ancient and gentle art of detecting. Filled with a desperate zeal to distinguish herself, Sally decided to 'shadow' the very next guest who arrived in the hotel. The first guest who arrived after Sally's decision was plainly a suspicious character. To begin with, he was quietly dressed and perfectly respectable in appearance. So Sally 'shadowed' the stranger in the

¹ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 17 July - Sep. 1913

most approved fashion. When he locked the door to his room she looked over the transom. Sure enough he took some jewels out of his suitcase. Sally instantly summoned the police. Entering the room to keep the man under closer surveillance, she accidentally pointed a fan, shaped like a pistol at him. Instantly his hands shot above his head. The funny part of it all was he really was the thief. Sally pocketed the reward and departed."²

Bliss Milford can be seen on Youtube in the film "Adventure of the Wrong Santa Claus" (1914). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwH2GGbD5U0>

Grace Cunard (1893 -1967) was an actress, screenwriter and film director. Her connection to Sherlock Holmes was that in 1914 she wrote the scenario for a two reel adaptation of the famous Conan Doyle story "A Study in Scarlet", for Gold Seal Film Company. Sherlock Holmes was played by Francis Ford, who also directed the film, and Dr. Watson was played by Jack Ford (Francis's younger brother, better known in later times as the great film director, John Ford).



This photo of Grace Cunard is from that year 1914, and with Francis Ford too!

² "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 19 page 17 Jan. - March 1914

Bessie Eyton (1890 - 1965), played Bessie Blake, a female Sherlock Holmes, in the film "The Missing Ruby" (1915) Born Bessie Harrison, Eyton starred in at least 200 melodrama, action westerns and crime films. In the 1910's she was visiting the Selig Film studios with a party of friends, when a director saw and liked her red hair because he said it would photograph a beautiful black, so he offered her a minor role, she had no formal training on stage, as did many early film actors, she was talented and soon rose to be one of Selig's most popular stars.



"The Missing Ruby" - (Selig) - March 3 - Another lady detective drama -- without the crooks. Nevertheless, a very valuable ruby disappears from a jewel case belonging to a young heiress, and a female Sherlock Holmes is called to solve the mystery. This she does, with neatness and dispatch. Bessie Eyton, as the detective, continued to look like a lady, even in her maid's costume."³

Flora Finch (1867 - 1940) played a female Sherlock Holmes, know as Serena Slim - the slender sleuth, in "Heavy Villains" (1915). Flora Finch was an English-born film actress who starred in over 300 silent films, including over 200 for the Vitagraph Studios film company.

³ "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 23 page 1763 Jan. - March 1915 Film Comments



"Flora Finch as a female Sherlock Holmes; Hughie Black as the village cut-up; Kate Prince as a cook; and John T. Kelly as a woman hater; are members of a cast in which Cissy Friz-Gerald, Charles Brown, William Shea, Arthur Cozine and Ethyl Corcoran play straight parts, in a paradoxically entitled comedy "Heavy Villains."⁴

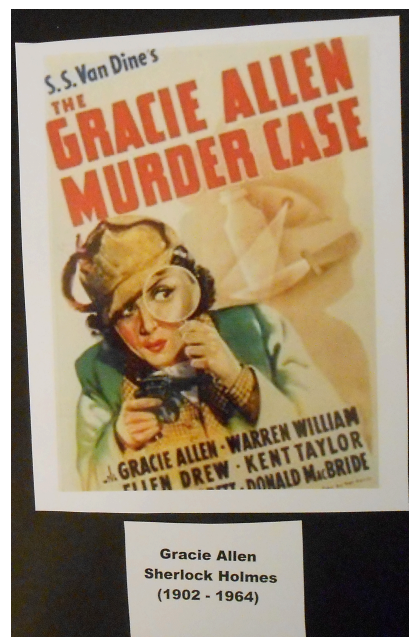
Zoe Rae (1910 - 2006), born [Zoë Rae Palmiter Bech](#), was a child silent film star, who appeared in approximately 58 films between 1915 and 1920. One of those films was "Little Miss Sherlock" (1918) for Universal. She was known as 'Little Zoe, the Universal Baby'.



⁴ "The Photo-Play Review", Page 14 April 6, 1915

"Little Miss Sherlock" - Universal -April 1 - "Will be a Little Zoe Rae feature, directed by Rea Berger, who becomes this clever little girl's screen manager with this issue. Norris Shannon wrote the story and Francis F. Clark made the screen preparations. Claire Du Brey, Charles Hill Mailes, and William Carroll will have prominent supporting roles."⁵

Gracie Allen (1895 -1964), best know for being part of the 'Burns & Allen' comedy team with husband George Burns, appeared as Holmes in this 1939 promotional poster for the sleuth series film S. S. Van Dine's "The Gracie Allen Murder Case". "A longtime fan of comedians



George Burns and Gracie Allen, 'Philo Vance' creator S. S. Van Dine wrote a tailor-made screenplay for the team, which emerged on-screen as 'The Gracie Allen Murder Case'. The Paramount studio executives decided to dispense with the services of George Burns, leaving scatterbrained Gracie on her own to match wits with urbane private detective Philo Vance (Warren William)."⁶

⁵ "The Moving Picture World " magazine (Vol, 35) page 539 Jan. - Mar. 1918

⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/movies/movie/93649/The-Gracie-Allen-Murder-Case/overview>

Dagmar, born Virginia Ruth Egnor, (1921 – 2001) was an American actress, model, and television personality of the 1950s. As a statuesque, busty blonde, she became the first major female star of television, receiving much press coverage during that decade.⁷ In 1954, on “The Milton Berle Buick Comedy Hour”, Dagmar confiscated



Basil Rathbone’s deerstalker and pipe, to help solve the case of the missing Buick. Poor Rathbone was distracted by Dagmar in a manner that reminded me of Benedict Cumberbatch and his encounter with Irene Adler in “A Scandal in Belgravia”.

End Part Two

⁷ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dagmar_\(American_actress\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dagmar_(American_actress))

