

'Good morning,' said Holmes politely. 'Are you Mordecai Smith's wife?'

'Yes,' replied the woman. 'What do you want?'

'Could I speak to your husband, please?' asked Holmes.

'No, you can't. He isn't here. I haven't seen him since yesterday morning.'

'Oh,' said Holmes, 'I wanted to hire a boat.'

'Well, perhaps I can help you,' said Mrs Smith. 'Which boat do you want?'

'I wanted to hire the steam launch. I have heard it is a very good boat. Let me see. What's the name? The ...'

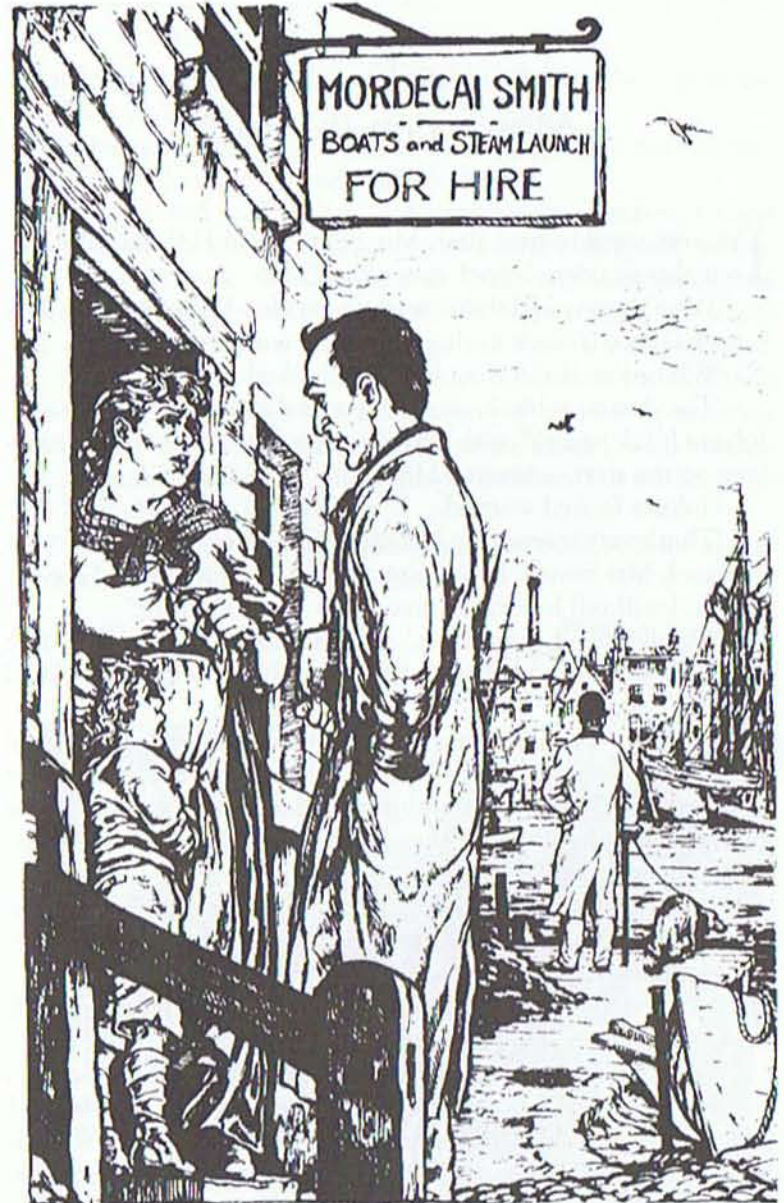
'The *Aurora*, sir,' said Mrs Smith.

'Oh, yes, that's right. I remember now. But where is the *Aurora*?' said Holmes, looking around. 'I don't see a steam launch anywhere.'

'Oh, sir. My husband has gone in the *Aurora*,' Mrs Smith replied and burst into tears. 'I'm very worried about him. I don't trust that wooden-legged man.'

'What wooden-legged man, Mrs Smith?' asked Holmes in a surprised voice.

'I don't know who he is, sir. But my husband went with a wooden-legged man in the *Aurora* yesterday morning and hasn't come back!'



'Oh, sir. My husband has gone in the *Aurora*.'