



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CRIME CLASSICS

FINAL PROOF

RODRIGUES OTTOLENGUI

READING GROUP GUIDE

1. Which story was your favorite? Your least favorite? Why?
2. A few of the stories read almost as jokes—for example, “The Missing Link” and “A Shadow of Proof.” Do you think that Ottolengui intended them seriously? Was Ottolengui making serious points about evolution and scientific technology?
3. Which character did you find to be more appealing to you—Barnes or Mitchel? Why? Their styles of “detecting” are very different—do you think that one is better at his job than the other? Do you think that Ottolengui is suggesting that the ideal detective has some of each one’s characteristics?
4. Do you think that Mitchel is a realistic, believable character? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think the stories of Sherlock Holmes are more popular than Ottolengui’s stories?

6. Some writers of this period—the “Sherlock Holmes hiatus”—tried to create detective characters that were similar to Holmes himself. Do you think Ottolengui had this in mind?
7. What makes a good mystery short story in your opinion? Is it important that there be a criminal who is caught and punished?