

Fallen London Writing Sample

The Case of The Wayward Will



The Case of the Wayward Will: Meeting Your Client

The Honey-Addled Detective is doing a creditable job of keeping his inebriation mostly to himself. His unfocused gaze in the general direction of a large covered mirror could be (and hopefully *is*) interpreted as thoughtful.

While the Sentimental Niece takes a few moments to recover her composure, her reasons for hiring detectives come into focus. Her deceased uncle's will has vanished, and without it she can't claim the necklace she was promised.





Ask about cousin Edwin

With no will to be found, he gets everything, apparently. In this case, *everything* includes the necklace in question, not to mention a title and estate.







Scion of a noble house

"Uncle Gussie is – was – Augustus Mosserby, 28th Earl of Grassepen.

"I suppose that makes poor Edwin number twenty-nine." The Sentimental Niece looks across the room at a picture of a young man: blonde, blue-eyed, aristocratically-chinned and with an affable (though vacant) expression. This, presumably, is the poor Earl Edwin.

"He says he can't bear to part with the necklace: it was his mama's. He offered me its value in Echoes instead." She shows you a letter as proof. The amount Edwin offers could buy half of London. "I refused, naturally. Money is so vulgar, don't you find? I simply want my necklace. As a memento."





You've gained 1 x Taking Notes... (new total 3).





The Case of the Wayward Will: Meeting Your Client

The death of someone as wealthy and distinguished as Augustus Mosserby, Earl Grassepen, would have merited more than a mention in the society pages. Mr. Huffam would no doubt have devoted a full page of *The Unexpurgated London Gazette* to the passing of such a pillar of the gentry! That there has been no mention of it in print is an undeniable oddity.

The Sentimental Niece shifts uncomfortably. Her look grows haughty.





Admit puzzlement over the lack of an obituary

Without all the pertinent facts, the Honey-Addled Detective's investigation is at risk of you applying your deductive skills in the wrong places.







Primogeniture as retirement plan

"Peers cannot simply transfer their title," she explains stiffly. "It passes to the heir – *after* their death. But Gussie missed Aunt Gertie terribly, and managing the estate was taking a heavy toll on him; so he made arrangements. Distasteful, but necessary.

"The title passed to Edwin as planned; and once he'd recovered, Gussie left for the tomb colonies."

Gussie, then, is only legally dead, for the purposes of inheritance. Why not simply ask him who should receive the necklace?

"Don't be absurd. Asking the deceased to adjudicate inheritance? How gauche. That is what the will is for." She sighs. "In any case, he never arrived. Somewhere en route, his ship simply vanished."



You've gained 1 x Taking Notes... (new total 4).

ONWARDS



The Case of the Wayward Will: Meeting Your Client

The Sentimental Niece has become markedly less sentimental as the interview has progressed, although her desire for her promised memento, and her grief at the loss of her Uncle Gussie, seem genuine enough.

Your welcome here is quickly wearing thin, but there is time for one final question. It never hurts to trace the victim's movements on the day they died, even if they went on holiday the following morning.



Ask about Gussie's last day

What did the old man do, in his final hours as an Earl?



GO

← PERHAPS NOT



Paying fealty: a final instalment

"I don't know, exactly," she says, "We shared a surname, not a house. We were close, but I don't track my own father's every move, let alone my uncle's."

She glances at the picture again. "You might ask Edwin. I know they paid a visit to the Shuttered Palace together. When I saw Edwin that evening, he seemed upset, although he wouldn't say why."

She rings a small hand bell, and stands. Her butler is at her side before the tinkling fades. "Thank you for your time, detectives," she says sweetly as you're escorted off the premises.



You've gained 1 x Taking Notes... (new total 5).

ONWARDS



The Case of the Wayward Will: Meeting Your Client

Drudgewick is quiet, genteel, clean, and worryingly safe for a London suburb. Yet despite these obvious drawbacks, there is something seductive about its orderly calm.

The Honey-Addled Detective sways gently beside you as you review your meeting with the Sentimental Niece. She didn't actually ask you to find her uncle's missing will, but when you're as wealthy as she must be, things tend to arrange themselves to your satisfaction without you ever needing to ask.



Confer with the Detective

How much of the Sentimental Niece's testimony was he aware of? How does he want to proceed?



GO

← PERHAPS NOT



Obvious next steps

He speaks slowly, the words dragged from some unfathomable distance and enunciated with great care.

"She may be certain Edwin is blameless, but I am far from convinced. His and Augustus' visit to the Palace left him still upset hours later, and the next day the will has mysteriously vanished? Quite a coincidence, if he is not involved."

Honey-Addled or not, the Detective makes a good point.

"You return home and sleep. Tomorrow, we divide our attentions. You see what you can learn at the palace. I will check my sources at the docks, in case anything suspicious occurred when Augustus departed for Venderbight."

Continue your investigation by canvassing the servants in the Shuttered Palace.



You have moved to a new area: your Lodgings



You are progressing your investigation.

0

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'Taking Notes...' has been reset: a conclusion, or a new beginning?



Progress your investigation at the Shuttered Palace, by speaking to the servantry.

ONWARDS



The Wayward Will: Furious Words, Murmured

Among the Palace staff, Augustus was called the Hidebound Earl because of his refusal to adopt the Neath's rhythms of life, death and post-death. Luckily for him, he was wealthy enough not to need to.

On his final morning, he and Edwin visited court to inform the Empress (through whispering intermediaries) about the upcoming change of Earls.

As they were leaving, a strenuous – though discreet, polite, and, of course, *quiet* – argument erupted between the pair. Edwin was heard to hiss that he would do 'whatever it takes to ensure she never touches the accursed thing'.



A message, delivered by courier-urchin

"Oi, longshanks! The guv'nor 'as a message for ya. Hang on, it's 'ere somewhere. No, that's me lucky rat-head. Or me lunch, maybe? Aha! There y'go."



GO

← PERHAPS NOT



Smeared, crumpled, worryingly sticky, but legible

Stonedock contacts yes Mosserby mount bandage steamer. Red wraps red chest red walk. Gangs plank help. Twenty-nine saw from key with client. Tearfall.

Now yestereve revisited, Grasping den progress.

"Don't ask me, chief," the courier-urchin says, to remind you he's still there. "The guv'nor was a bit distant, if you catch my drift." He regards you expectantly until you surrender a tip, whereupon he vanishes with impressive speed.

Luckily, your recent experiences of the Detective's babbling assist you in deciphering the note:

Clay dockers confirm Augustus – alive again, but bandaged and not fully recovered – boarded a steamer for Venderbight, needing help with the gangplank. Edwin and your client saw him off (tearfully) from the quay. The Detective is now returning to Drudgewick to interview Edwin.

You'll need to hurry there too, if you're going to stop him wrecking his reputation.



You have moved to a new area: Wolfstack Docks



You are progressing your investigation.

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ONWARDS



The Wayward Will: Interviewing Cousin Edwin

Edwin Mosserby recently inherited a sprawling mansion set in expansive landscaped grounds, along with the title *29th Earl of Grassepen*. The estate occupies a full third of the island, limiting Drudgewick's expansion opportunities while simultaneously increasing property prices suburb-wide and making existing residents very happy.

High walls and imposing gates hide the estate from unworthy eyes, but such trifling obstacles don't deter you. You are cunning and resourceful, but mostly, (thanks to the Sentimental Niece), you are *expected*.



Meet Cousin Edwin

You're deposited in another black-bedecked parlour, much larger than the Niece's. After settling the Honey-Addled Detective in a comfortable chair, there's nothing to do but wait.



GO

← PERHAPS NOT



What ho, what ho!

Edwin ambles into the room, smiling broadly. "I say, this is all dashed exciting. Missing wills, consulting detectives – it's like one of those novels where the deductive chappie twigs the villain by the rare feather in his hat! I daresay you've found the blasted thing already and are just waiting for the most dramatic time to reveal who pinched it, what?"

His smile falters when the Honey-Addled Detective doesn't respond, but your condolences on his father's disappearance distract him.

"He'll turn up eventually. Dying didn't inconvenience the old duffer much, so I doubt a dip in the briny will slow him down for long. Now, how can I help you brainy sleuths?"



You now have 1 x Taking Notes....

ONWARDS



The Wayward Will: Interviewing Cousin Edwin

The Honey-Addled Detective seems in a waking stupor, only his eyes conveying any sort of consciousness. Edwin radiates an eagerness to be helpful combined with a total lack of complex thought, like an overenthusiastic puppy. It's endearing, in a scary sort of way.

You've somehow found yourself in a room with a genius who never knows if he's dreaming or awake, and a man who is simultaneously the wealthiest and most empty-headed individual this side of the Empress' throne.

Both are waiting for you to speak. Better ask an intelligent question.



Ask about the old Earl's will

The Sentimental Niece is adamant Uncle Gussie had one, but it vanished after his death. Has Edwin seen it?



GO

← PERHAPS NOT



Proof of existence

"Oh, absolutely! I've seen the bally thing dozens of times. Papa never tired of waving it at a chap. Promising or threatening to rewrite it, depending on his mood. Usually the latter."

Since his father's death?

"Ah, no. Sorry, old bean. Before we ankled round to Vicky's pile, he was scribbling away at it in his office, if that helps. He didn't think much of my prospects when it came to running the estate so I wondered if he was finally disinheriting me, but he said he was amending which of the Surface estates he was giving the Empress. Doesn't seem to matter much down here, what?"



You've gained 1 x Taking Notes... (new total 2).

ONWARDS



The Wayward Will: Interviewing Cousin Edwin

The ancestral seat of the Earls of Grassepen (since London's relocation, anyway) is large enough that a document craftily hidden could take centuries to locate. You don't have that sort of time, and besides, craftiness doesn't seem like something Edwin is capable of.

Edwin claims the last time the will was seen, it was in his father's office. That room will no doubt have been searched already. But not by you.



Ask to examine his father's office

It's the last place the will was seen, and therefore the first place to begin looking.



GO

← PERHAPS NOT



The scene, but of what crime?



Edwin pales on entering the office, and studiously avoids looking at the bloodstained chair still positioned by the desk. The Honey-Addled Detective will be no help with Edwin: he's staring fixedly at what look like pencil shavings on the floor.

Peppering Edwin with questions proves a good distraction from the more visceral aspects of the furniture, and by the time you've checked the desk for hidden compartments, examined those books large enough to hide a will inside and looked for signs of forced entry at each window, you've learned the whole strange, sad sequence of events.

After the argument at the palace, Edwin had gone drinking, and stayed out until late. Augustus had returned home, where he locked himself in his office and brought the estate's accounts up to date before shooting himself in the chest. The morning after he died, he'd collected his luggage and boarded his ship.

And the argument at the palace? "I didn't want Mrs. Wyckham to have to clean the room around his corpse or touch the revolver, so I made him promise to lock the door."



You've gained 1 x Taking Notes... (new total 3).

ONWARDS



The Wayward Will: Interviewing Cousin Edwin



Augustus' office may have been searched already, but for some unexplained reason, it has not yet been cleaned. It looks and smells, quite accurately, as though someone died in there some time ago.

Edwin's composure has been badly shaken. For his sake (and that of your olfactory abilities), it's probably a good idea to steer the investigation to something more pleasant to look at, and with a less offensive smell.



Ask about the necklace



Would it be possible to see it? The Sentimental Niece describes it as quite enchanting.



GO

← PERHAPS NOT



Out of character



"Ah, no." Edwin's demeanour changes in an instant. He's serious, and slightly nervous. "No, I think not. It's very personal to me, you see. All I have left of mama."

Doesn't his mother live in Venderbight? He could always visit her.

"Out of the question," he declares. "She's dead. Legally speaking, of course. One does not consort with the deceased. Standards must be maintained, after all. And now, I think it's time for you to be going. Good luck locating the will, and all that." He turns and strides away.

The dourest butler yet escorts you and the Honey-Addled Detective out through the gates.



You've gained 1 x Taking Notes... (new total 4).

ONWARDS