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Sherlock Holmes isn't known for his sartorial elegance, but Jeremy Brett claims this particular costume helped him to find the character of the Great Detective.

Footnote: In 1942, a variation on "The Adventure of the Dancing Men" was presented in *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SECRET WEAPON*, the second film in Universal's Holmes series with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. The coded messages were the plans for constructing the titular weapon, and the villain was none other than Professor James Moriarty.

THE NAVAL TREATY
Adaptation: Jeremy Paul
Direction: Alan Grint

Percy Phelps, a young clerk in the Foreign Office, has been charged with the duty of copying *THE NAVAL TREATY*. His uncle, the Foreign Minister, has warned Percy that under no circumstances must the contents of the treaty leak out. The document being a particularly long one, the weary clerk finds himself in need of strong coffee to get through his night-long task. Percy goes in search of Tangey, the commissionaire, and finds the man fast asleep in his lodge at the foot of the stairs. Suddenly, a bell on the wall rings out. The commissionaire is startled: "But if you're here, sir, who's ringing the bell?" "The bell?" asks Percy, "What bell is it?" "Well, it's the bell in the room in which you're working, sir." Percy races upstairs to find the document gone and his career dashed to ruins.

"The Naval Treaty", published in 1893, was the first in the trio of "missing document" stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and

the last Sherlock Holmes case to be published before the Great Detective's seemingly fatal encounter with Moriarty in "The Final Problem". (The other cases are 1903's "The Adventure of the Second Stain", originally billed by the hopeful Conan Doyle as "The Last Sherlock Holmes Story Ever To Be Written", and 1908's "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans", in which brother Mycroft makes his second and last appearance.) In rating the stories, Holmes scholars invariably (and rightly) put either "The Second Stain" or "The Bruce-Partington Plans" in first place; "The Naval Treaty" perpetually runs a sorry third. Yet "The Naval Treaty" has at least one shining moment, the incident of the bell, in which Conan Doyle found a notably dramatic means to present the theft of the title document.

But for a shadowy, slow-motion sequence wherein Holmes all-too-sluggishly lays hands on the thief, Granada TV does well by the tale. If it isn't up to the level of their later film versions of *THE BRUCE-PARTINGTON PLANS* and, especially, *THE SECOND STAIN*, it at least gives full weight to the incident of the bell. At this point in the series, Granada seems a tad uncertain in the Holmesian universe. *THE NAVAL TREATY* is the only episode in which it's unclear whether Watson resides in Baker Street. (The original takes place in the July immediately following the doctor's marriage to Miss Mary Morstan, whom he definitely doesn't wed in Granada's production of *THE SIGN OF FOUR*.) *THE NAVAL TREATY* also contains the series' sole reference to Billy the Page before his first on-screen appearance in 1990's *THE PROBLEM OF THOR BRIDGE*. Still, the episode has much to offer, with Jeremy Brett and David Burke in fine form as Holmes and Watson, David Gwillim an impressive bundle of nerves as Percy Phelps, and Rosalie Williams providing one of her best moments as that faithful, if culinarily limited, Scotswoman, Mrs. Hudson.

—Richard Valley



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Percy Phelps (David Gwillim) takes time out from a breakdown to relax with fiancée Annie Harrison (Alison Skilbeck).