

When the Chair Collapsed

Sherlock Holmes is a name almost universally known, although he is a fictional character – a private detective created by British author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Holmes has a proficiency with observation, forensic science and logical reasoning that borders on the fantastic, which he employs when investigating cases for a wide variety of clients. Best known for portraying Holmes in 14 Hollywood films made between 1939 and 1946 and in a radio series was the British actor Basil Rathbone.



Rathbone rose to prominence as a Shakespearean stage actor and went on to appear in more than 70 films, primarily costume dramas, swashbucklers and, occasionally, horror films.

In one of his roles on the live stage, Rathbone had to take a seat at a table and pretend to have a conversation on the phone. One night, the chair collapsed under him.

Totally unprepared for the fall, he nonetheless recovered quickly. He began, realistically, to get up slowly and rub the offended areas. Then he picked up the phone and continued his imaginary conversation – including an apology for the interruption.

Shocked at first, the audience applauded loudly at the end of the scene, knowing they were in the presence of a pro who, if necessary, could fly by the seat of his pants – literally.

What about you? When accidents or untoward circumstances suddenly come your way, how do you react? Do bystanders feel they are in the presence of a pro?

Accidents, errors and unforeseen calamities all occur. But as a leader, you must keep going and inspire others to do the same.

It is one of the principles of human nature that when adversity comes your way, people will judge you more by what you do than by what just happened to you.

It becomes the measure of a man or woman.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed (2 Corinthians 4:8-9 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter