Elementary My Dear Watson

The solution to the mystery that follows depends on your knowledge of chemical elements, symbols, and formulas, Dr. Watson. If a symbol is given, substitute the name of that element; if the name is given, substitute the symbol. The names of compounds may also be symbolized by formulas. Do not fail me, good doctor. The solution must be in my hands by midnight a week hence, or the consequences could be devastating for your grade!

Twas the week before Christmas, when Inspector Lestrade came to me with a most distraught gentleman in tow. (Helium) __________ explained that the gentleman had purchased several pieces of (Ag) __________ and (Au) __________ jewelry for his wife (iodine) __________ surmised, which had disappeared during a street (carbon + argon) __________ ride (nobelium) __________ doubt to see (hydrogen + erbium) __________! The victim interrupted with “You must (Fe) __________ this out before the 24th, Mr. (Ho) __________! I will not (Fe$_2$O$_3$) __________ until the jewels are recovered and the culprit made to (S) __________ as (iodine) __________ have this day! (holmium + tungsten) __________ dare someone (sulfur + tellurium + aluminum) __________ from me! I’d gladly (Ba) __________ with the fishes and watch him (Zn) __________ in the Thames!” His diatribe did tend to (B) __________.

(Oxygen + nitrogen) __________ questioning, I learned the (carbon + argon) __________ was number (Sn) __________, an express which did not stop during (hydrogen + iodine + sulfur) __________ trip.

(Arsenic) __________ to unusual events, (helium) __________ remembered a (Cu) __________ evicting the occupants of the seat behind him and sitting there himself. Enjoying the ride, (helium) __________ was just thinking “these areas (As) __________,” when a bad jolt made the (calcium + selenium) __________ of jewelry (sulfur + lithium + phosphorus) __________ between the seat and back on the bench (helium) __________ occupied. The (Cu) __________ retrieved it for him. (Oxygen + nitrogen) __________ checking later, he found the jewelry missing from the (calcium + selenium) __________. (Astatine) __________ their destination, (helium) __________ and the (Cu) __________ searched everyone, and each other, (arsenic) __________ well as the (carbon + argon) __________. (Nobelium) __________ jewels were found.

By this time, Lestrade seemed eager to (beryllium) __________ rid (oxygen + fluorine) __________ our pompous victim, as (tungsten + arsenic) __________ (iodine) __________. (Indium) __________ private, the Inspector explained that he wasn’t personally (Sb) __________, but just wanted the theft cleared (uranium + phosphorus) __________ quickly (sulfur + oxygen + tungsten) __________ he could get (oxygen + nitrogen) __________ to matters more important than petty theft. (Iodine) __________ agreed to help, not to save the Inspector time and embarrassment (tungsten + helium + nitrogen) __________ he failed, (arsenic) __________ I (potassium + neon + tungsten) __________ he would, but because I had the (calcium + selenium) __________ already solved. Informed of this, the Inspector cried, “(Sulfur + oxygen) __________ fast! (Hydrogen +
“Oxygen + tungsten)!?” My only reply (tungsten + arsenic) ________ that he meet me after (I) ________d, armed and carrying a (Ni) ________.

(Astatine) ________ dusk, the Inspector and (iodine) ________ rode the next to last streetcar of the day to the end (oxygen + fluorine) ________ the line, the (C) _________. I used Lestrade’s (Ni) ________ to pay my fare. (Indium) ________ the deserted (C) _________. I found number (Sn) ________ and climbed inside. Reasoning that the culprit sat behind our victim (Pb) ________ me to examine that seat, and I found scratches on the (F) ________. Prying (uranium + phosphorus) ________ a loose piece of (F) ________, I found the missing (Ag) ________ and (Au) ________ jewelry in a (boron + silver) _________. I substituted worthless (SiO$_2$) ________ to simulate the heft of the (rhenium + aluminum) ________ articles, and replaced the (boron + silver) ________ under the (F) ________. The Inspector and (iodine) ________ then concealed ourselves to await the thief. Nearly dozing (oxygen + 2 fluorine) ________ I was startled by the sound of footsteps echoing (indium) ________ the deserted (C) _________. A shadow entered number (Sn) ________ and I heard the (F) ________ being lifted, a brief silence, then an expletive and “The jewels (Ar) ________!” The Inspector yelled “Police!” and I yelled “(Cs) ________!” as we both jumped into different ends of the streetcar. After a brief struggle, the Inspector had his (Ne) ________ the culprit, (tungsten + holmium) ________ was subdued and handcuffed. I turned (oxygen + nitrogen) ________ the torch and beheld a uniform (oxygen + fluorine) ________ blue with (bromine + arsenic + sulfur) ________ buttons. “(Ho) ________!” exclaimed the Inspector, “It’s the (Cu) ________!” “Of course,” I replied, “it’s elementary, Inspector. He’s a (Si) ________ who found his comedy routine impersonating a (Cu) ________ in prison to (beryllium) ________ infinitely (molybdenum + rhenium) ________ rewarding on the outside—almost.”