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Elementary, my dear Watson!



Arthur Conan Doyle wrote fifty-six short stories and four novels about the most famous detective in literature, Sherlock Holmes. Holmes's first recorded case was *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and it introduced Holmes and his friend and companion, Dr Watson, to the reading public. It also introduced a number of elements that Doyle went on to use repeatedly in later stories and which we can use to identify a "typical" Sherlock Holmes story.



The initial scene. Sherlock Holmes's stories usually begin at home in his office at 221b Baker Street (this one opens, unusually, at Watson's house). Holmes and Watson are often relaxing before something or someone arrives with an unsolved case. At this point, the mystery begins. After making some deductions about the visitor, Holmes starts investigating, determined, as always, to 'omit nothing'.

GLOSSARY

- **considerations:** thoughts
- **deductions:** logical conclusions
- **omit:** ignore; eliminate
- **on-the-spot:** in the place (where something happened)
- **recorded:** (here) written
- **role:** (here) part
- **scarlet:** bright red
- **stands for:** represents
- **superstition:** belief in luck or magic



2

The detective's method. At this stage, Holmes usually explains to Watson his methods of deduction. He tells him about the importance of facts and science over fantasy and superstition, which at that time were often used to explain mysterious events, long before science began to play an important role in legal cases. Through Holmes, Doyle tells us that science provides a reliable method of using facts to discover the truth. Holmes stands for human reason against superstition.

3

On-the-spot investigation. Holmes does not like solving mysteries from his office, he prefers going to the scene of the crime and examining the case himself. He usually keeps his findings to himself, waiting for the best moment to reveal them.

4

Summary of the case. Towards the end of the story, Holmes usually explains how he found the solution to the case, underlining the clues that helped him arrive at his conclusion and giving his final considerations.

elementary

THE BOSCOMBE VALLEY MYSTERY

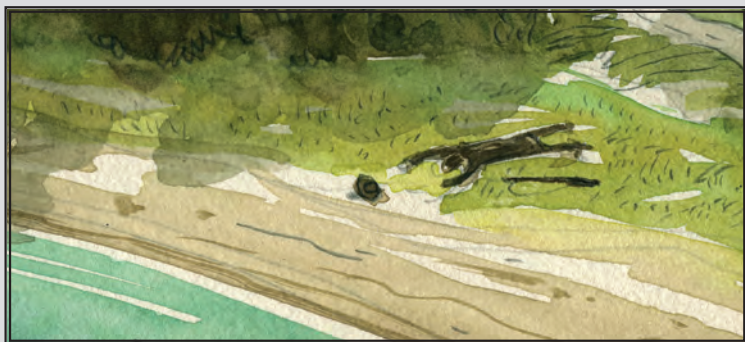
Dr Watson



Miss Alice Turner



Mr Charles McCarthy



James McCarthy



Inspector Lestrade



Mr John Turner



Sherlock Holmes



BEFORE READING

- 1 **▶ MP3** Listen and match the descriptions to the characters.
Label the pictures a to f.



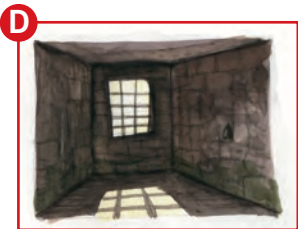
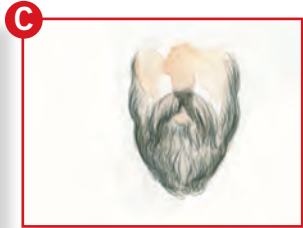
- 2 **▶ MP3** Listen again and answer the questions with the name of a character from Exercise 1.

- a Who tells the story of the Boscombe Valley Mystery?
- b Who goes to the Boscombe Valley to help Inspector Lestrade?
- c Who believes that James McCarthy is the murderer?
- d Who is beautiful and has blue eyes?
- e Who is in prison for the murder of his father?
- f Who is very rich but also very ill?



3 Match the words to the pictures.

telegram prison beard magnifying glass police cloak



4 Use the words from Exercise 3 to complete the sentences below.

- a** The famous detective Sherlock Holmes wears a hat and a long
- b** He carries a with him.
- c** Dr Watson receives a from Sherlock Holmes one morning.
- d** James McCarthy is eighteen years old and in
- e** The think James McCarthy murdered his father.
- f** Mr John Turner is an old man with a long and grey hair.

1 A telegram from Sherlock Holmes

1 I am Dr Watson and I am a friend of the famous detective • Mr Sherlock Holmes.

One morning, my wife and I were having breakfast, when a telegram came. It was from Sherlock Holmes. He wrote:

Dear Watson, Can you come and help me for a few days? Am going to the west of England to investigate • the Boscombe Valley murder. Please come. The Boscombe Valley is beautiful. We leave London from Paddington Station on the 11:15 train.

‘What do you think?’ said my wife, looking at me. ‘Are you going to go?’

‘Well,’ I answered, ‘I have a lot of patients • to see at the moment.’

‘The other doctor can see your patients,’ my wife replied. ‘You can have a little holiday. You know you like to help Mr Sherlock Holmes.’

‘Yes,’ I replied. ‘But I must pack • a suitcase • quickly. The train leaves in half an hour.’

Because I was a soldier in Afghanistan I am very good at packing quickly. Soon I was in a taxi with my suitcase, on the way to Paddington Station.

GLOSSARY

- **detective:** person who tries to find out information about a crime
- **investigate:** find out about
- **pack:** put things in a bag or suitcase
- **patients:** people a doctor helps
- **suitcase:** bag for clothes while travelling

When I got there, Sherlock Holmes was walking up and down. He was tall and thin and he wore a long cloak• and a hat.

‘Thank you very much for coming, Watson,’ he said. ‘It is good to have you with me. You always help me a lot. If you can find two seats on the train for us, I can buy the tickets.’

On the train, Holmes and I were the only two in the carriage•. Holmes had lots of newspapers with him. He read all the newspapers, wrote some ideas on paper and thought for a long time.

‘So, Watson,’ he asked. ‘Do you know about the Boscombe Valley murder?’

‘No, I don’t. I don’t read newspapers very often,’ I replied.

‘There isn’t very much information in the London newspapers,’ said Holmes. ‘The Boscombe Valley murder is a simple case•, but it’s also very difficult.’

‘Hmmm, that sounds a little strange, Holmes,’ I replied.

‘But it’s true,’ he said. ‘In this case, it looks very bad for the son of the murdered man. The police think he – the son – is the murderer. Listen, Watson, I’m going to tell you what I know.’

MATCH

Find and underline the words in the text linked to ‘murder’. Then match.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1 murder | <input type="checkbox"/> person killed |
| 2 murdered man | <input type="checkbox"/> illegal killing of a person |
| 3 murderer | <input type="checkbox"/> killer |

GLOSSARY

- **carriage:** (here) car of a train
- **cloak:** long coat without sleeves
- **case:** (here) event that police investigate



1 Circle the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- a** We left Lestrade and drove to our hotel. We **had / were having** lunch there.
- b** As we **drank / were drinking** tea in the hotel, Lestrade laughed.
- c** His servant knew that McCarthy **had / was having** an appointment.
- d** In my hotel I **sat / was sitting** on a sofa and tried to read a novel.
- e** When I got there, Sherlock Holmes **walked / was walking** up and down.
- f** Mr McCarthy was walking alone. James McCarthy followed his father a few minutes later. And James **had / was having** a gun under his arm.
- g** 'My father **lies / is lying** dead in the woods, and I need help!'
- h** 'Maybe someone took the cloak when you **didn't look / weren't looking**.'
- i** Mr Turner closed his eyes. He **drank / was drinking** some water and continued.
- j** Poor Mr Turner **had / was having** a limp in his right leg.
- k** Holmes returned very late that night. He **came / was coming** back alone, as Lestrade was staying at another hotel in Ross.

2 What is the word for each of the definitions below? The first letter is already there.

- a** Go red in the face. B _ _ _ _
- b** Terrible dream. N _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- c** Bag for clothes while traveling. S _ _ _ _ _ _
- d** A more respectful form for 'old' people. E _ _ _ _ _
- e** Confused; not sure. P _ _ _ _ _

K A2 Key English Test Reading and Writing Part 2

1 Read the sentences and choose the best word (A, B, or C) for each space.

- a** Mr John Turner a lot of money in Australia.
A had **B** did **C** made
- b** 'Watson, you always believe obvious facts,' Holmes answered.
A mustn't **B** couldn't **C** don't
- c** 'There is not information in the London newspapers.'
A an **B** some **C** much
- d** '..... I was a soldier in Afghanistan I am very good at packing quickly.'
A When **B** Because **C** After
- e** '..... the grey cloak belong to the murderer?'
A But **B** Did **C** How
- f** 'His son James was now grown up, and was my Alice.'
A so **B** here **C** she
- g** We all got a carriage and drove to our hotel.
A on **B** into **C** up
- h** In the morning it was sunny and there were clouds in the sky.
A no **B** many **C** any
- i** Holmes looked at the ground his magnifying glass.
A through **B** and **C** by
- j** lunch Holmes was silent and had a strange expression on his face.
A While **B** Having **C** During