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Sherlock Holmes Adventures

18 Chapters

Day 1-18

W19-W24

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 1: The Veiled Visitor

It was a cold, gray morning in April when Dr. Watson was woken by a sharp knock at his door. Sherlock Holmes stood there, already dressed, with a look of quiet excitement. "A lady has arrived by the early train," he said, "and she will not wait." In the sitting room sat a woman wearing a thick veil, with her hands trembling in her lap. Holmes spoke kindly, and she lifted the veil. Her face was pale and tired, and her hair had turned gray too soon. She told them her name was Helen Stoner. "It is not the cold that makes me shake," she said. "It is fear." Holmes poured her some hot coffee and told her she was safe. He could tell at once that her case was a serious one, and he promised to investigate it with all his skill. The consequence of delay, he said gently, might be harm to her, so she should tell everything. She had traveled through the dark before dawn because she had nobody else to ask. Watson drew his chair closer and took out his notebook, as he always did, ready to write down every word. Holmes leaned back, closed his eyes, and listened. This would be a significant case, and he could already sense that the challenge ahead was greater than most. ★ A nervous young client arrived at Baker Street. She sat down, took a deep breath, and began her strange story.

THINK How did Helen Stoner travel to Baker Street?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 2: The Story of Stoke Moran

Helen Stoner told her story slowly. She lived in a very old house called Stoke Moran, in the countryside, with her stepfather, Dr. Grimesby Roylott. His family had once been rich, but the money was gone and the house was falling apart. Dr. Roylott had a terrible temper, and he rarely let visitors come near. He kept a pet cheetah and a baboon that roamed freely over the grounds, and the villagers feared him almost as much as the animals. Helen and her twin sister, Julia, had grown up in that gloomy place. Two years earlier, Julia had been planning her wedding when she suddenly fell ill and did not recover. On her last night she had come to Helen's door in great alarm, whispering a puzzling phrase: "It was the speckled band!" Nobody understood those words. Helen had never forgotten them. The doctors could find no cause, and the police found no clues. Holmes asked careful questions, because he wished to establish every fact before he decided anything. He wanted to determine whether the words were a clue or only a frightened dream. Watson saw that Holmes had begun to investigate in his mind already, though he sat perfectly still. The mystery was significant, and it was far from finished. Holmes asked whether anyone else lived in the house, and Helen shook her head. The cook and the maid had left long ago, afraid of the doctor's temper. ★ A nervous young client arrived at 221B Baker Street. Now she needed his help for a new reason.

THINK What was the name of Helen's house?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 3: A Whistle in the Night

Helen went on with her story. Now she was engaged to be married, and her stepfather had agreed to the wedding. But a few days before she came, Dr. Roylott had said that workmen would repair the walls of her bedroom. She must sleep in the room that had belonged to Julia. On the first night she lay awake, listening to the wind. Suddenly she heard a low, soft whistle in the dark, the very sound Julia had mentioned before she died. Helen jumped up, lit a lamp, and found nothing. She had not slept since, and in the morning she took the first train to London. She placed her hands together and begged for help. Holmes listened to every word with half-closed eyes. "You have not told me everything," he said calmly, and he noticed small marks on her wrist where a strong hand had gripped her. She admitted that her stepfather had been angry. Holmes determined to visit Stoke Moran that same afternoon, while Dr. Roylott was away in town. He said the consequence of waiting could be dangerous, and he asked Watson to come along. It was a significant decision. The challenge was to learn the secret of that house before something terrible happened to Helen. **★ A nervous young client arrived at 221B Baker Street with a deeply strange problem that seemed almost completely impossible to explain.** But Holmes was already thinking of a way to solve it.

THINK What sound did Helen hear in the night?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 4: The Bent Poker

Soon after Helen left, the door of the sitting room flew open with a crash. A huge man filled the doorway. He wore a black coat and a tall hat, and his face was yellow and fierce, like an angry bird. "Which of you is Holmes?" he roared. "I am," said Holmes calmly. "I am Dr. Roylott of Stoke Moran. I know my stepdaughter has been here. What has she told you?" Holmes answered that the weather was cold for April. The big man grew angrier. "Do not interfere in my affairs," he growled. Then he seized the iron poker from the fireplace and bent it into a curve with his bare hands. He threw it on the floor and stormed out. Holmes laughed softly, picked up the poker, and bent it straight again. "I am not quite as strong," he said, "but if he had stayed, I would have shown him that my grip is not much weaker than his." Watson was amazed. Holmes had noticed every detail of the visitor: his size, his dusty boots, and his wild temper. Now they knew that Dr. Roylott had followed his stepdaughter to London. It was a significant clue. The consequence of his visit was that Holmes became even more determined to investigate. He wanted to establish the truth behind the doctor's secret. He also saw how great the challenge would be. On the way down the stairs Holmes asked Watson to notice the dust on the carpet and the scrape on the step. Even a visitor in a rage, he said, leaves a record of himself for anyone who cares to read it. ★ Holmes noticed every small detail around him. Then he put on his hat and set off.

THINK What did Dr. Roylott bend with his hands?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 5: The House at Stoke Moran

That afternoon Holmes and Watson took a train and then a carriage to Stoke Moran. The old house stood among tall trees, with one wing of stone walls that had fallen into ruin. Helen met them at the gate. Dr. Roylott was away, and she showed them her room. Holmes did not speak much. He walked slowly around the room, looking at everything. The windows were fastened tight, and the shutters were iron. He knelt and examined the floor carefully. Then he saw a bell-rope hanging beside the bed. He pulled it and frowned: it was not connected to any bell. Above it was a small ventilator that opened, not to the outside air, but into the next room. "Very strange," murmured Holmes. "It is ridiculous to put a vent between two rooms." He also noticed that the bed had been fixed to the floor, so it could not be moved. Watson saw nothing unusual, but Holmes found all these details significant. He had begun to establish a picture of how the room was arranged. He asked Helen to stay in her old bedroom that night and keep her window open. The consequence of a mistake might be great. He would investigate the next room, which belonged to Dr. Roylott, before dark. Watson tried to see what Holmes saw, but the room looked ordinary to him. Holmes tapped the wall, measured the distance from the bed to the vent, and wrote three short notes in his book. When he finished, he looked pleased and a little worried at the same time. ★

Holmes carefully noticed every tiny detail around him. Each strange object was part of a puzzle, and he meant to determine its purpose.

THINK *What was strange about the bell-rope?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 6: Things Others Missed

Holmes and Watson then walked into Dr. Roylott's room. It was plain and untidy. In one corner stood an iron safe. On a shelf Holmes saw a small saucer of milk, and on a chair hung a dog-lash tied into a small loop. "What do you make of that?" asked Watson. Holmes did not answer. He stood quietly for a long time with his hands behind his back. Dr. Roylott had told Helen that her room needed repairs, and yet no workmen had come. The bell-rope, the ventilator, the bed fixed to the floor, the saucer of milk, and the strange loop of leather were pieces of a single picture. "I think I see it now," he whispered. He asked Watson to wait for him at the village inn and to be ready for a long night. As they walked out, Holmes explained that most people look but do not see. The clues were in plain sight, and Helen had lived among them for years. He told Watson that he would investigate the final point in the dark, and the consequence of a wrong guess could be great. It was a significant moment. Holmes determined to establish his idea with one careful test. He stared at the sky and the great gray house behind them. ★ Holmes carefully noticed every tiny detail around him, while most ordinary people simply walked straight past without ever seeing them at all. Watson was deeply impressed.

THINK What stood in the corner of the doctor's room?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 7: Waiting in the Dark

That evening Holmes and Watson waited at the Crown Inn, which stood across the fields from Stoke Moran. They watched Dr. Roylott return in his carriage, and soon a light appeared in Helen's window. It was the signal. "Watson," said Holmes quietly, "I am not sure whether I should take you with me. There is a distinct element of danger." Watson answered that he would not leave his friend alone. At eleven o'clock the lights went out, and the two men walked silently through the dark garden and slipped through the open window into Helen's room. Holmes whispered that they must not speak, and not strike a light, for the consequence would be disaster. They sat in the darkness and listened. Far away a clock struck the hours. Holmes placed a long, thin cane across his knees, and Watson held a lantern that was shut. The old house creaked, and an owl called from the trees. Watson felt his heart beat harder with each passing minute. He knew that Holmes meant to investigate the mystery tonight, and that the plan was risky. The challenge was to stay calm and wait for the right moment. This was a significant test of their courage. Holmes had to determine whether his idea was right, and to establish proof. The cold crept through Watson's coat, and he wondered how long Helen had borne such nights in this very room. ★ **The clues slowly led Holmes into real danger.** Yet he sat as calm as a stone.

THINK Where did Holmes and Watson wait before the night?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 8: The Soft Hiss

The hours dragged by. At midnight, one o'clock, two o'clock, nothing happened. Watson's eyes began to close, but Holmes touched his arm to keep him awake. Then, a little after three, a faint light flickered through the ventilator, and quickly vanished. Watson smelled burning oil and warm metal, as if a lantern had been shut. Next came a soft, gentle sound, like steam from a kettle. "You see it?" whispered Holmes. At once he sprang up, struck a match, and began to lash fiercely at the bell-rope with his cane. "Do you see it, Watson?" he cried. Watson saw nothing but heard a clear, low whistle. Holmes kept striking at the rope and the ventilator above it. Then a terrible cry rang out from the next room, a cry so full of fear and pain that the whole house seemed to shake. After a long moment the house became silent again. Holmes did not smile. He had hoped that the danger would be driven back, and the plan he had set out to establish had worked. But the night was still significant, and the consequence of those few seconds was not yet known. Watson held his breath. For a moment Watson could not tell whether the sound was real or only the work of his nerves. Holmes pressed his arm again, a signal that told him to stay steady. Neither of them dared to breathe too loudly, and the dark seemed to wait with them. ★ **Following the clues slowly led Holmes into genuine danger.** Holmes took the lantern and quietly opened the door. He would now investigate the doctor's room, but he did not know what he would find.

THINK *What did Holmes strike with his cane?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 9: More Than a Clever Mind

Holmes and Watson crossed the corridor and opened the door of Dr. Roylott's room. A lamp stood on the table, and the iron safe was open. The doctor sat in his chair, in a long gray dressing gown, with his feet in loose slippers. The dog-lash lay across his knee. On his face was a look of horror, and around his head was a strange yellow band with brown speckles. It was not a band at all, but a living creature, a rare and dangerous snake from India that the doctor had trained to climb through the ventilator at night. This was the "speckled band" that Julia had named. With a quick movement of the lash, Holmes drove the snake back into the safe and locked it away. The doctor's plan had failed, and his own creature had turned on him. Help was called, and the police took charge of the whole matter. Later, Holmes admitted to Watson that he had made one mistake and had nearly put Helen in harm's way. "Violence and cleverness together," he said quietly, "are what danger requires." It was a significant lesson. The challenge had shown him that careful reasoning could not protect anyone without bravery. He had to determine his next step with a steady heart. The consequence was that Helen was safe. Watson wrote down every detail and decided to investigate his own courage. ★ Following the clues slowly led Holmes into genuine danger, quietly reminding Watson that brilliant thinking alone was simply not always enough. Dawn came, and they went home.

THINK What was the "speckled band"?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 10: The Goose and the Stone

Two days after Christmas, Dr. Watson called on Holmes and found him lying on the sofa with a battered old hat beside him. A lens and a pair of forceps lay on the table. "I have a case of my own for you," said Holmes. The hat had been found by Peterson, the doorman, after a scuffle in the street, along with a fat Christmas goose. When Peterson's wife cut open the goose, she discovered a dazzling blue stone in it. Holmes recognized it from the newspapers: it was the blue carbuncle, a jewel that belonged to the Countess of Morcar and that had been stolen from her hotel room only days before. The police had already arrested a plumber named John Horner, who had been working in the room. Everyone said the case was solved. But Holmes held the stone up to the light and said it was far too small a clue to prove anything. He wanted to investigate the whole matter from the beginning. The challenge was to find who owned the goose and the hat. A man's life was at stake, and the consequence of a wrong answer could be unfair punishment. He had to establish how the jewel had traveled inside a bird. It was a significant puzzle, and he would determine the facts with great care. ★ **The most obvious answer turned out to be completely wrong.** Poor Horner was not the thief.

THINK Who found the goose and the hat?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 11: Following the Goose

Holmes put a short advertisement in the evening newspapers. Soon a short, round man named Henry Baker came to Baker Street. He explained that he had dropped his hat and his goose when some young ruffians had startled him. Holmes could not return the goose, which had already been eaten, so he offered him a fresh one. Baker was delighted. As he left, Holmes asked him where he had bought the first goose. Baker said that he belonged to a goose club at the Alpha Inn, and that the landlord, Mr. Windigate, had sold him the bird. At once Holmes and Watson went out into the cold night. The landlord told them the geese came from a salesman called Breckinridge at Covent Garden market, who had bought them from a woman named Mrs. Oakshott. The seemingly most obvious answer turned out to be completely wrong, for the jewel had not been stolen by the plumber. At the market, Breckinridge became angry when Holmes asked too many questions about the birds. Holmes remained calm and began to establish a plan. The consequence of finding the farm would be the path to the real thief. It was a significant step, though a long walk through the dark streets. Watson had to investigate the shops while Holmes did the questioning. Every trail was a new challenge to determine. The advertisement cost Holmes very little, but it brought him a good deal. Watson was surprised that so small a thing as a lost goose could lead them across half the city. Holmes only smiled and said that the smallest problems often hide the largest answers. ★ The seemingly most obvious answer turned out to be completely wrong. The goose was now their only guide.

THINK What club did Henry Baker belong to?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 12: The Real Thief

While Holmes and Watson stood outside the market, they heard a thin, nervous man asking where he could find geese. He was James Ryder, the head attendant at the hotel where the Countess had been staying. Holmes invited him to Baker Street, where it was warm. There, Holmes showed him the little blue stone, and Ryder turned pale and trembled. At last he confessed. He had taken the carbuncle while the Countess was away, and he and a maid named Catherine Cusack had planned to blame Horner, since the plumber was in the room that day. Ryder had hidden the jewel inside a goose, hoping to retrieve it later. But he had picked the wrong bird. Holmes did not want to see the man locked away for the first mistake of his life. He said that it was the season of forgiveness. He let Ryder leave the city and sent word to the police that John Horner was innocent. Watson smiled. The challenge had been to find the truth, and the truth was that the plumber had done nothing wrong. The consequence of the real thief being found was that Horner was freed. It was a significant triumph. Holmes had to investigate carefully and establish each link, and he determined the answer without leaving his chair for long. ★ **The most obvious answer turned out to be completely wrong, and only Holmes had clearly seen the real truth from the very start.**

THINK *Who was the real thief?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 13: The Red-Headed League

On a gray autumn morning, a stout man with bright red hair and a shabby coat visited Baker Street. His name was Jabez Wilson, and he ran a small pawnshop in the city. He had come with a puzzling tale. Two months earlier, his assistant, Vincent Spaulding, had shown him an advertisement for the Red-Headed League. A rich man had left money to help men with red hair, and a job was waiting for anyone who qualified. Wilson had gone to the office, where hundreds of red-headed men stood in a crowd. To his surprise he was hired. The work was simple: for four hours each morning he copied out pages of an encyclopedia, for four pounds a week. While he worked, Spaulding minded the shop. But this morning, Wilson had found a notice on the door saying that the League was dissolved. Holmes asked Watson to take careful notes, and Watson did, listening for anything odd. Together they began to investigate, Holmes thinking and Watson observing. The consequence of the strange job, Holmes said, might be a larger crime. The challenge was to understand why anyone would pay so much for so little. It was a significant question. He would establish the pattern and determine the meaning. ★

Holmes and Watson worked together as a perfect team. After Wilson left, Holmes lit his pipe and said it was a three-pipe problem.

THINK What was Jabez Wilson's job?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 14: Saxe-Coburg Square

The next day, Holmes and Watson walked to Saxe-Coburg Square, where Wilson's shop stood. It was a dingy square with a small garden, and the pawnshop had three golden balls above the door. Holmes did not go in. Instead he struck the pavement hard with his stick two or three times, then knocked on the door. A clever young man opened it. Holmes asked him the way to the Strand, and then simply stared at the knees of the young man's trousers, which were worn and stained. This was Vincent Spaulding. Holmes then walked around the corner and looked at the buildings behind the shop, including a large bank. "Well, Watson," he said, "I think I know enough now." He asked Watson to come back that evening, along with Inspector Jones of the police and Mr. Merryweather, the bank director. Watson saw that Holmes had put together a plan from what looked like random details. Holmes determined to catch the criminals, and it was a significant case, with a big prize at stake. They would establish proof during the night. The consequence of waiting would be to let the thieves escape. For this challenge they had to investigate the cellar. They worked as a team, Holmes thinking and Watson helping him prepare. ★ Holmes and Watson always worked as a remarkable and perfect team. That night would show how clever the plan was.

THINK What did Holmes strike with his stick?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 15: A Night in the Cellar

At ten o'clock that night, Holmes, Watson, Inspector Jones, and Mr. Merryweather met at the bank. Mr. Merryweather led them down a stone staircase into a vast cellar stacked with wooden boxes. He explained that the boxes held thirty thousand gold coins, which the bank had borrowed from another bank. Holmes, who had worked out the plan, whispered that they must sit in the dark and wait. Watson stood quietly behind a crate, and Inspector Jones kept the lantern covered. Holmes was the thinker, Watson was the steady friend, and Jones brought the law, so each of them had something the others lacked. For an hour they waited without sound. Then a thin line of light appeared between the stones in the floor. A stone lifted, and a hand came up through the opening, followed by a young man with a pale face. It was Vincent Spaulding, whose real name, Holmes whispered, was John Clay, a famous criminal. He was helping another man climb out of the tunnel. Watson held his breath. The challenge had been to catch them before they took anything. The consequence of an early move would be an escape. It was a significant moment. Holmes had established the facts, and he alone could determine the exact time to act. ★

Holmes and Watson always worked brilliantly as a remarkable and perfect team, because each of them had unique strengths that the other person simply lacked.

THINK What was stored in the bank cellar?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 16: Caught at Last

Everything happened quickly. As soon as Clay stepped out of the tunnel, Holmes sprang from the shadows and seized him by the collar. The second man cried out and tried to dive back into the hole, but Inspector Jones's officers were waiting there, and he was caught as well. Clay struggled for a moment, then stood still. He was a clever, cool young man, and he gave a bow. "You have done well," he said, "and I admit that I have been beaten." He also asked that the officers not touch him with dirty hands, and he insisted on being called "sir." Holmes laughed in spite of himself. Mr. Merryweather thanked Holmes warmly, since the bank had been saved from a very large theft. Inspector Jones led the prisoners away. Watson smiled with relief, glad that no one had been hurt. Clay had spent months digging a long tunnel from the pawnshop cellar to the bank, and he might have succeeded if Holmes had not asked the right questions. The consequence of that careful work was a victory for honest people. The case had been a significant challenge, and Holmes had to investigate patiently. He did not rush, and he did not guess. He established each fact and used it to determine what came next. Watson felt proud to have stood beside him in the dark. ★

Justice was finally served through patient careful thinking. The night ended with the first light of morning.

THINK Who seized Clay?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 17: How Holmes Knew

In the morning, back at Baker Street, Watson asked Holmes how he had known. Holmes sat in his armchair and explained slowly. From the start he had thought that no one would pay a red-headed man four pounds a week for copying an encyclopedia. The real purpose was to keep Wilson out of his shop for four hours each day. The assistant had agreed to work for half wages, and he was always going down to the cellar to take photographs, which gave him an excuse to be there. That suggested a tunnel. When Holmes struck the pavement with his stick, the ground in front of the shop sounded solid, so the tunnel did not run that way. The worn, stained knees of Spaulding's trousers showed that he had been digging. Behind the pawnshop was the bank, which was the only reason to dig in that direction. The League had been dissolved on a Saturday, because the tunnel was finished, and the thieves wanted the whole weekend to get away. Watson was filled with admiration. The challenge had been great, and the problem was a significant one. Holmes had to investigate patiently, establish what was strange, and determine the plan step by step. The consequence of rushing would have been to let the criminals escape. Watson listened without speaking, and when Holmes finished, he understood that each small oddity had been a part of one design. ★ True justice was finally served through patient and careful thinking. Holmes smiled and reached for his violin.

THINK Why was Wilson kept away from his shop?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 18: A Quiet Evening at Baker Street

That evening, the fire burned warmly in the sitting room at Baker Street, and rain tapped on the window. Watson sat with his notebook, while Holmes played slow music on his violin. Watson said that the case had been wonderful, and that he was glad to have been part of it. Holmes put down the bow. "My life," he said, "is spent trying to escape the dullness of everyday existence. Cases like these help me do that." He added, a little shyly, that without Watson to listen and to write, his work would lose half its value. Watson laughed and said that he only wrote down what Holmes did. But he knew that he had also learned something. In the three cases, Holmes had faced a clever doctor, a missing jewel, and a bold tunnel, and each time the answer had come from noticing small details, thinking slowly, and acting bravely when the moment came. None of the solutions had depended on luck. The challenge in every case was different, but the method was the same. Watson felt that he would always remember the significant lessons of those months. The consequence of Holmes's patience was that the innocent were protected. He had learned to investigate, to establish facts, and to determine what to do. ★ True and lasting justice was finally served not through luck or coincidence but through patient, careful, and disciplined logical thinking over many long days. Holmes bowed his head, smiled, and began another song.

THINK What did Holmes say helped him escape dullness?