

THE SHERLOCK HOLMES

CHILDREN'S COLLECTION

**SHADOWS, SECRETS AND
STOLEN TREASURE**



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Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Scarlet

Based on the original story from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,
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SHERLOCK HOLMES

**A STUDY IN
SCARLET**



SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE





I met Sherlock Holmes by chance. It seems strange to me that such random occurrences may have such an impact on the direction of one's life, but that is precisely what happened that day in London.

I had returned to the city in 1879 after a bullet wound in my shoulder had ended my career as an army surgeon. My pension barely covered the

expense of keeping a room at a hotel, and my health was too fragile for me to find work as a doctor.

I was having a drink at the Criterion Bar and considering how to find cheaper lodgings when someone tapped me on the shoulder. I turned to see young Stamford, who had assisted me when I was a doctor at St Bartholomew's Hospital.



It was good to see a familiar face, so I invited him to lunch.

We hailed a hansom cab and as we rattled through the busy London streets, I told him briefly about my adventures until we reached a restaurant. As we

Hansom cab

A quick and relatively cheap mode of public transport, just right for two people. It can take corners fast without tipping over, despite having only two wheels.

The driver sits outside at the back of the carriage, so that passengers are able to have a private conversation.

Another choice is the Clarence cab. These have four wheels and are called 'growlers' because of the noise they make over cobbles. They are useful for groups of more than two, or if taking luggage.

talked, I realised just how lonely I had been.

‘You poor devil,’ Stamford said as we seated ourselves at a table and reached for the menu. ‘Your injuries must still bother you. What are you up to now?’

‘Looking for lodgings,’ I answered. ‘And wondering whether it is possible to get comfortable rooms at a reasonable price.’

‘How strange,’ said Stamford. ‘You are the second man to tell me that today.’

‘And who was the first?’ I asked. ‘A fellow who works in the

chemical laboratory at the hospital,' he said. 'He cannot find anyone to share the set of very pleasant rooms that he has found in Baker Street.'

'Then I am the man for him!' I cried. 'I should prefer sharing than living alone.'

Stamford looked at me strangely over his glass. 'You don't know Sherlock Holmes yet,' he said. 'Perhaps you would not care for him as a constant companion.'

'What is there against him?'

'Oh, nothing,' said Stamford

quickly. ‘He is a little strange in his ideas, but a decent enough fellow. He knows a lot about chemistry and likes to gather a lot of trivial knowledge. I have no idea what his career plans are.’

‘Have you ever asked him?’

Stamford shook his head. ‘He is not a man who talks much about himself – or anything else for that matter.’



‘I should like to meet him,’ I said, eagerly. ‘A quiet and studious man sounds just the sort I would prefer. I had enough noise and excitement in Afghanistan to last me a lifetime.’

‘Then we shall drive to the laboratory after lunch,’ said Stamford.

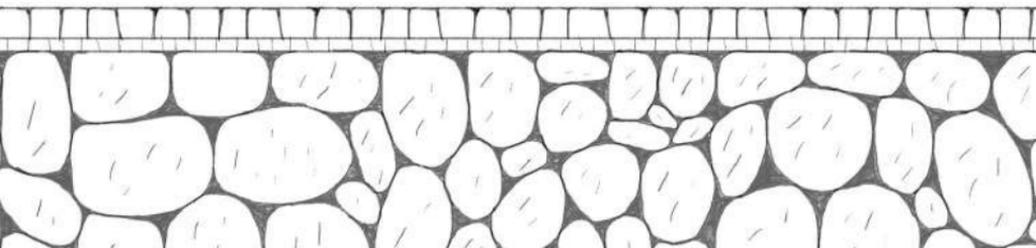
As we made our way to the hospital, Stamford told me a few more details about the man I was about to meet.

‘Don’t blame me if you don’t get on with him,’ said Stamford. ‘I

have only met him a few times in the laboratory.’

‘If we don’t get on it will be easy to part company,’ I said. ‘But it seems to me, Stamford,’ I added, looking hard at him, ‘that there must be a reason that you don’t want to be held responsible. What is it? Tell me honestly.’

Stamford laughed. ‘Holmes seems a little cold-blooded. I think that if he were conducting an experiment, he would not hesitate to try it out on a friend to see what happened. Not from



an evil mind, you understand,
but just out of curiosity – and he
would try it out on himself too.
He seems to have a passion for
definite and exact knowledge.’

‘Quite right too.’

‘Yes, but that could be taken to
excess.’

I mulled this over until we
reached the hospital.



‘Here we are,’ said my companion as we stepped out of the cab, ‘you must judge for yourself’

We turned into a narrow lane and entered through a small side door into the hospital. After winding our way through the building, we reached the chemical laboratory. Broad, low tables were covered with test tubes and Bunsen burners with flickering blue flames. Only one person was in the room, bending over a table absorbed in his work. All at once he sprang up with pleasure.

‘I’ve found it! I’ve found it!’
He ran towards us with a test tube in his hand. ‘I have found a re-agent that reacts with the haemoglobin in blood!’ His face shone with a delight that could

Haemoglobin

A substance in blood that gives it its red colour. It carries oxygen from the lungs to every cell in the body. Blood with oxygen in it is bright red. Arteries carry this blood directly from the heart to all parts of the body, while veins carry blood back to the heart. By then it has given up most of its oxygen and become darker in colour. To save life it is vital to know whether someone is bleeding from a vein or from an artery using this colour difference.

not have been greater if he had struck gold.

‘Dr Watson, Mr Sherlock Holmes,’ said Stamford, introducing us.

‘How are you?’ The man gripped my hand with a strength I could hardly believe. ‘You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive.’

‘How on earth do you know that?’ I asked, astonished.

‘Never mind,’ he said, chuckling to himself, ‘but about the haemoglobin test. No doubt you see the significance?’

‘Interesting, no doubt.’



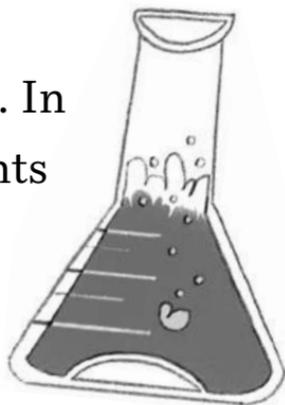
‘Why, man, it is the most practical discovery for years. It gives us a reliable test for blood stains!’

He seized me by the coat sleeve and dragged me over to the table where he had been working.

‘Let us have some fresh blood,’ he said, digging a needle into his finger and drawing a drop of blood into a pipette. ‘Now I add this blood to a litre of water. You see how it now looks like pure water? The blood is completely diluted.’

Into the mixture he threw some white crystals and added a few

drops of a clear fluid. In an instant the contents turned a reddish brown and then a brownish powder sank to the bottom of the glass jar.



‘Ha!’ he cried, clapping his hands like a small child with a new toy. ‘What do you think of that?’

‘It seems to be a very precise test,’ I said.

‘The old tests were clumsy and uncertain. Had this test been invented years ago, hundreds of men now walking the earth would

have paid the penalty for their crimes.'

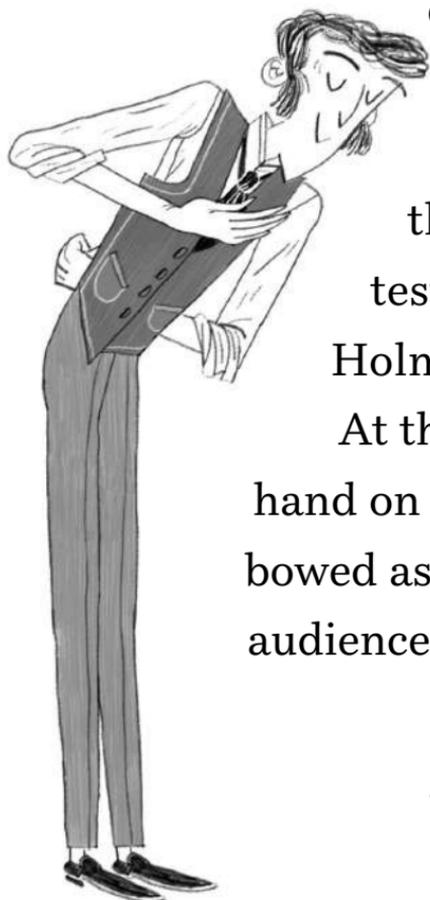
'Indeed,' I said.

'So many criminal cases hinge on the one point: are the brownish stains on the culprit's

clothing from mud, rust, fruit ... or blood? Now

there is a reliable test: the Sherlock Holmes test.'

At this he put his hand on his heart and bowed as if to an imaginary audience.



‘You are to be congratulated,’ I said, surprised at his enthusiasm. Yet I could, of course, see how useful such a test would be to the police.

Holmes gave me a gracious smile and put a plaster on the finger he had punctured. I could see that his hands were covered with similar pieces of plaster and discoloured by strong acids.

‘We came here on business,’ said Stamford, sitting down on a stool and pushing another towards me with his foot. ‘My friend here is looking for lodgings