

Starter

DOMINOES

Sherlock Holmes: The Speckled Band

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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DOMINOES

Sherlock Holmes: The Speckled Band

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



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Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), born in Edinburgh, Scotland, is best known as the creator of Sherlock Holmes. He started writing after working as a doctor, and soon became one of the world's best-known authors. The Sherlock Holmes stories *The Blue Diamond*, *The Emerald Crown*, *The Norwood Mystery*, and *The Sign of Four* are also available as Dominoes.

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ACTIVITIES

BEFORE READING

1 Match the words and pictures. Use a dictionary to help you.

a ☐ prison

b ☐ marry

c ☐ inn

d ☐ lamp



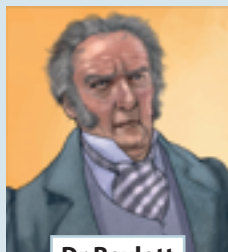
2 What do you think happens in the story? Complete the sentences with the words from Activity 1 in the correct form.

a Dr Roylott an English woman in India.

b He kills somebody and he goes to

c Holmes and Watson stay at an near Stoke Moran.

d Helen Stoner puts a in her window and Holmes sees it.



Dr Roylott



Helen Stoner



Sherlock Holmes



Dr Watson

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It is 1883 in London and we are at 221B Baker Street. Sherlock Holmes is at home with his good friend, **Dr** Watson. Mrs Hudson, the **servant**, comes into the room.

‘Mr Holmes,’ she says, ‘there is a young woman at the door. She wants to see you.’

‘Of course,’ Holmes says.

A woman of about thirty walks into the room. Her hair is beginning to go white and her face is older than her years.

‘Please sit down,’ Holmes says. ‘Are you cold? Would you like a hot drink?’

‘I’m not cold,’ the woman answers. ‘I’m tired and I’m afraid. Oh, Mr Holmes, can you help me? I can’t give you any money now, but in six weeks I **marry**. After that, I can give you money for your work.’

Doctor, Dr this person helps people when they are ill

servant a person who works for someone rich

marry to make someone your husband or wife

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‘It doesn’t matter about that now,’ Holmes smiles. ‘Now sit down and tell me your story.’

‘My name is Helen Stoner and I live with my **stepfather**. His name is Dr Grimesby Roylott.’

‘Ah yes, the Roylotts of Stoke Moran,’ Holmes says. ‘I know them. They are an old, important family.’

‘They aren’t very important now,’ Helen says. ‘They have the big, old house at Stoke Moran, it’s true, but it needs a lot of work. My stepfather lives on my mother’s money. She is dead, and my **poor** sister is dead too.’

‘Your sister?’ Holmes asks.

‘Yes, my sister Julia.’

stepfather not your father, but married to your mother

poor something you say when you feel sorry for someone



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Holmes thinks for a minute.

*'Now I remember the story of that family. Grimesby Roylott goes to India and he's an important doctor in **Calcutta** for many years. He marries a woman with two young children. One day, there is a **robbery** in his house. Roylott is angry with one of his servants, he hits him and the man dies. Roylott is in **prison** in India for a long time. When he comes out, he cannot work and he goes back to England with his family. His wife dies when her daughters are two years old. The little girls go to live with their stepfather at his family's old house. The family live happily for some years.*

Calcutta
/kæl'kʌtə/

robbery taking something that is not yours

prison a place where people must stay when they do something wrong



3

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Cheetah

‘Miss Stoner, why are you afraid?’ Holmes asks.

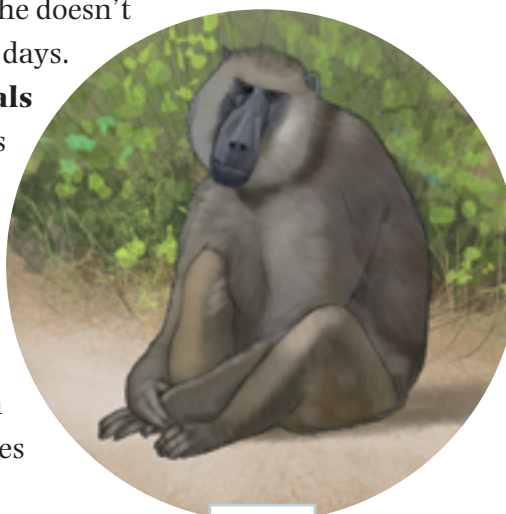
‘My stepfather is a different man now, a very unhappy man. He is always angry and everybody is afraid of him, not only me. His only friends are the **gypsies**. They sleep near the house. He sometimes goes away with them for many weeks. When he comes back, he doesn’t speak for days.

He brings **animals** from India and he puts them in the garden. A **cheetah** and a **baboon** are living there now. Nobody wants to visit us. It’s **terrible!**

‘So you are **alone** with your stepfather,’ Holmes says quietly.

‘Yes, Julia is dead. Dead for two years – and only two weeks before her **wedding**,’ Helen says **sadly**. ‘I want to talk to you about her, Mr Holmes. I can’t stop thinking about her **death** these days. I feel very alone in that big house. My days are long and I can’t sleep at night because I see her poor face!’

Holmes looks carefully at the young woman. ‘Tell me about your sister’s death, Miss Stoner,’ he says.



Baboon

gypsy somebody who doesn’t live in a house, and travels a lot

animal a living being that moves; a dog or a cat is an animal

terrible very bad; making people afraid

alone with nobody

wedding the day when two people marry

sad not happy

death when someone stops living

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YOU HAVE REACHED THE END OF THE SAMPLE.

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