

Classic Series

SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES ③

Silver Blaze

A Case of Identity

The "Gloria Scott"

A Scandal In Bohemia

The Adventure of Black Peter

The Adventure of The Abbey Grange

The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton



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Publisher's Note

It has been our constant endeavour at the **V&S Publishers** to publish all kinds of books ranging from Fiction, Non-fiction, Storybooks, Children Encyclopaedias, to Self-Help, Science Books, Dictionaries, Grammar Books, Self-Development, Management Books, etc.

However, this is for the first time that we are venturing into the vast, rich and fathomless ocean of English Literature and have come up with a set of *ten storybooks called the Greatest Classic Series* authored by some of the greatest and eminent writers of the world. There is a lot to learn from their writing style, selection of plot, development and building of theme and suspense of the story, emphasis and presentation of characters, dialogues, working towards the climax of the story, presenting the climax, and then finally concluding the story.

Each these books are of about 200 pages containing around ten popular stories or more of renowned authors like Oscar Wilde, Ernest William Hornung, Guy de Maupassant, O. Henry, Saki, Washington Irving, Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens, Jules Verne, Jack London, Mark Twain, Edgar Allen Poe, H.G. Wells, Ambrose Bierce, Amelia Edwards, Edith Wharton, Wilkie Collins and many more. The series is called The Greatest Classic Series as all the names of the books begin with the word, 'Greatest' like the Greatest Adventurous Stories, Greatest Detective Stories, Greatest Love Stories, Greatest Ghost Stories, and so on. Besides this, three of the ten books are exclusively on the Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, one of the best detectives the world has ever known written by none other than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Besides the above mentioned characteristics, the books contain an introductory page before each story introducing the author, his brief life history, notable works and literary achievements. Each story has a set of word meanings on each page followed by an exercise meant exclusively aiming the school students to help them grasp the essence of the story easily and quickly.

These books are not only a boon for the school-going students, particularly studying in senior classes from the seventh standard till the twelfth, but are also a treasure trove for all those young and aspiring writers, voracious readers and lovers of English language and literature.

Each of these ten books focus on a theme, such as adventure, love, terror, humour, or supernatural happenings, and are so captivating and real to life that readers may find it difficult to choose from them and so it's better to pick the entire series.

Wishing you all a happy and enjoyable reading...

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Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



Born on May 22, 1859

Died on July 7, 1930

Notable Works: *Stories of Sherlock Holmes, The Lost World, A Study in Scarlet, etc.*

Honours: Knight Bachelor (1902) and Archie Goodwin Award (2005)

Early Life

Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle, DL (a Deputy Lieutenant is a military commission in the United Kingdom and one of the several deputies to the Lord Lieutenant of a lieutenancy area) was born on May 22, 1859 at 11 Picardy Place, Edinburgh, Scotland. He was a Scottish physician and writer, most noted for his stories about **the detective, Sherlock Holmes**, generally considered a milestone in the field of crime fiction, and for the **adventures of Professor Challenger**. He was a prolific writer, whose other works include science fiction stories, plays, romances, poetry, non-fiction and historical novels.

His father, Charles Altamont Doyle, was an English of Irish descent, and his mother was an Irish. Although he is now referred to as “Conan Doyle”, the origin of this compound surname is uncertain. Supported by wealthy uncles, Conan Doyle was sent to the Roman Catholic Jesuit preparatory school, Hodder Place, Stonyhurst, at the age of nine. He then went on to Stonyhurst College until 1875. From 1875 to 1876, he was educated at the Jesuit school Stella Matutina in Feldkirch, Austria. From 1876 to 1881, he studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh, including a period working in the town of Aston (now a district of Birmingham) and in Sheffield, as well as in Shropshire at Ruyton-XI-Towns. Conan Doyle began writing short stories while studying. His earliest extant fiction, “The Haunted Grange of Goresthorpe”, was unsuccessfully submitted to Blackwood’s Magazine. His first published piece, “The Mystery of Sasassa Valley”, a story set in South Africa, was printed in Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal on September 6, 1879. Later that month, on September 20, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle published his first non-fictional article, “Gelsemium as a Poison” in the British Medical Journal.

Following his term at the university, he was employed as a doctor on the Greenland whaler - the Hope of Peterhead in 1880 and after his graduation, as a ship’s surgeon on the SS Mayumba during a voyage to the West African coast in 1881. He completed his doctorate on the subject of tabes dorsalis in 1885.

Literary Works and Achievements

His practice was initially not very successful. While waiting for patients, Conan Doyle

again began writing stories and composed his first novels, *The Mystery of Cloomber*, not published until 1888, and the unfinished *Narrative of John Smith*, which went unpublished until 2011. He amassed a portfolio of short stories including “The Captain of the Pole-Star” and “J. Habakuk Jephson’s Statement”, both inspired by Doyle’s time at sea.

Doyle struggled to find a publisher for his work. His first significant piece, *A Study in Scarlet*, was taken by Ward Lock & Co on November 20, 1886, giving Doyle £25 for all rights to the story. The piece appeared later that year in the Beeton’s Christmas Annual and received good reviews in *The Scotsman* and *the Glasgow Herald*. The story featured the first appearance of Watson and Sherlock Holmes, partially modelled after his former university teacher, Joseph Bell.

Death of Sherlock Holmes

In December 1893, in order to dedicate more of his time to what he considered his more important works (his historical novels), Conan Doyle had Holmes and Professor Moriarty apparently plunge to their deaths together down the Reichenbach Falls in the story “The Final Problem”. Public outcry, however, led him to bring the character back in 1901, in “The Hound of the Baskervilles”, though this was set at a time before the Reichenbach incident. In 1903, Conan Doyle published his first Holmes short story in ten years, “The Adventure of the Empty House”, in which it was explained that only Moriarty had fallen; but since Holmes had other dangerous enemies—especially, Colonel Sebastian Moran—he had arranged to also be perceived as dead. Holmes ultimately was featured in a total of **56 short stories** and **four Conan Doyle novels**, and has since appeared in many novels and stories by other authors too.

Later Years

Following the death of his wife, Louisa in 1906, the death of his son, Kingsley, just before the end of World War I, and the deaths of his brother, Innes, his two brothers-in-laws (one of whom was E. W. Hornung, creator of the literary character, Raffles) and his two nephews, shortly after the war, Conan Doyle sank into depression. He found solace supporting spiritualism and its attempts to find proof of existence beyond the grave. He was also a member of the renowned paranormal organisation, **The Ghost Club**. Its focus, then and now, is on the scientific study of alleged paranormal activities in order to prove (or refute) the existence of paranormal phenomena.

His book, *The Coming of the Fairies* (1921) shows he was apparently convinced of the veracity of the five Cottingley Fairies photographs (which decades later were exposed as a hoax). In *The History of Spiritualism* (1926), Conan Doyle praised the psychic phenomena and spirit materialisations produced by Eusapia Palladino and Mina “Margery” Crandon.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was found clutching his chest in the hall of Windlesham, his house in Crowborough, East Sussex, on July 7, 1930. He died of a heart attack at the age of 71. His grave is at Minstead, England.

Trivia

A statue honours Conan Doyle at Crowborough Cross in Crowborough, where he lived for 23 years. There is also a statue of Sherlock Holmes in Picardy Place, Edinburgh, close to the house, where Conan Doyle was born.



The Adventure Of The Abbey Grange

~ Arthur Conan Doyle

IT was on a bitterly cold and frosty morning, towards the end of the winter of '97, that I was **awakened** by a **tugging** at my shoulder. It was Holmes. The candle in his hand shone upon his **eager**, stooping face, and told me at a glance that something was **amiss**.

"Come, Watson, come!" he cried. "The game is **afoot**. Not a word! Into your clothes and come!"

Ten minutes later, we were both in a cab, and rattling through the silent streets on our way to Charing Cross Station. The first faint winter's dawn was beginning to appear, and we could dimly see the occasional figure of an early workman as he passed us, blurred and indistinct in the **opalescent** London **reek**. Holmes nestled in silence into his heavy coat, and I was glad to do the same, for the air was most bitter, and neither of us had broken our fast.

It was not until we had consumed some hot tea at the station and taken our places in the Kentish train that we were sufficiently **thawed**, he to speak and I to listen. Holmes drew a note from his pocket, and read aloud:

Abbey Grange, Marsham, Kent

3:30 am

My Dear Mr. Holmes,

I should be very glad of your immediate assistance in what promises to be a most remarkable case. It is something quite in your line. Except for releasing the lady, I will see that everything is kept exactly as I have found it, but I beg you not to lose an instant, as it is difficult to leave Sir Eustace there.

Yours faithfully,

Stanley Hopkins

"Hopkins has called me in seven times, and on each occasion, his summons have been entirely justified," said Holmes. "I fancy that each one of his cases has found its

Thawed - To make
less tense

Reek - A strong dirty
smell

Opalescent - Very
colourful

Afoot - On foot

Tugging - To pull at
with force

Awaken - Wake up

Eager - Enthusiastic

Amis - Wrong



way into your collection, and I must admit, Watson, that you have some power of selection, which *atones* for much which I *deplore* in your narratives. Your fatal habit of looking at everything from the point of view of a story as opposed to a scientific exercise has ruined what might have been an instructive and even classical series of demonstrations. You *slur* over work of utmost finesse and delicacy, in order to *dwell* upon sensational details which may excite, but cannot possibly instruct the reader."

"Why do you not write them yourself?" I said with some bitterness.

"I will, my dear Watson, I will. At present I am, as you know, fairly busy, but I propose to devote my declining years to the composition of a textbook, which shall focus on the whole art of detection into one volume. Our present research appears to be a case of murder."

"You think this Sir Eustace is dead then?"

"I should say so. Hopkins's writing shows considerable agitation and he is not an emotional man. Yes, I gather there has been violence, and that the body is left for our *inspection*. A mere suicide would not have caused him to send for me. As to the release of the lady, it would appear that she has been locked in her room during the *tragedy*. We are moving in high life, Watson, crackling paper, 'E.B.' monogram, coat-of-arms, *picturesque* address. I think that friend Hopkins will live up to his reputation, and that we shall have an interesting morning. The crime was committed before twelve last night."

"How can you possibly tell?"

"By an inspection of the trains, and by *reckoning* the time. The local police had to be called in, they had to communicate with Scotland Yard, Hopkins had to go out, and he in turn had to send for me. All that makes a fair night's work. Well, here we are at Chiselmhurst Station, and we shall soon set our doubts at rest."

A drive of a couple of miles through narrow country lanes brought us to a park gate, which was opened for us by an old lodge-keeper, whose haggard face bore the reflection of some great disaster. The avenue ran through a noble park, between lines of ancient *elms*, and ended in a low, widespread house, pillared in front after the fashion of Palladio. The central part was evidently of a great age and shrouded in ivy, but the

Elms - A kind of tree

Reckoning -

Calculating

Inspection - Viewing critically

Atone - In agreement

Deplore - Criticize

Slur - Insult

Dwell - Stay

Tragedy - Disaster

Picturesque - Scenic

large windows showed that modern changes had been carried out, and one wing of the house appeared to be entirely new. The youthful figure and alert, eager face of Inspector Stanley Hopkins confronted us in the open doorway.

"I'm very glad you have come, Mr. Holmes. And you too, Dr. Watson. But, indeed, if I had my time over again, I should not have troubled you, for since the lady has come to herself, she has given so clear an account of the affair that there is not much left for us to do. You remember that Lewisham gang of burglars?"

"What, the three Randalls?"

"Exactly! The father and two sons. It's their work. I have not a doubt of it. They did a job at Sydenham, a fortnight ago and were seen and described. Rather strange to do another so soon and so near, but it is them, beyond all doubt. It's a hanging matter this time."

"Sir Eustace is dead, then?"

"Yes, his head was knocked in with his own poker."

"Sir Eustace Brackenstall, the driver tells me."

"Exactly, one of the richest men in Kent. Lady Brackenstall is in the morning room. Poor lady, she has had a most dreadful experience. She seemed half dead when I saw her first. I think you had best see her and hear her account of the facts. Then we will examine the dining room together."

Lady Brackenstall was no ordinary person. *Seldom* have I seen so graceful a figure, so womanly a presence, and so beautiful a face. She was a blonde, golden-haired, blue-eyed, and would no doubt have had the perfect complexion which goes with such colouring, had not her recent experience left her drawn and *haggard*. Her sufferings were physical as well as mental, for over one eye rose a *hideous*, plum-colored swelling, which her maid, a tall, *austere* woman, was bathing *assiduously* with vinegar and water. The lady lay back exhausted upon a couch, but her quick, observant gaze, as we entered the room, and the alert expression of her beautiful features, showed that neither her wits nor her courage had been shaken by her terrible experience. She was enveloped in a loose dressing gown of blue and silver, but a black sequin-covered dinner dress lay upon the couch beside her.

"I have told you all that happened, Mr. Hopkins," she said, wearily.

Haggard - Exhausted
look

Seldom - Rarely

Hideous - Ugly

Austere - Severe

Assiduous -

Attentive

“Could you not repeat it for me?”

“Well, if you think it necessary, I will tell these gentlemen what occurred. Have they been in the dining room yet?”

“I thought they had better hear your ladyship’s story first.”

“I shall be glad when you can arrange matters. It is horrible to me to think of him still lying there.” She *shuddered* and buried her face in her hands. As she did so, the loose gown fell back from her forearms. Holmes uttered an exclamation.

“You have other injuries, madam! What is this?” Two *vivid* red spots stood out on one of the white, round limbs. She hastily covered it.

“It is nothing. It has no connection with this *hideous* business tonight. If you and your friend will sit down, I will tell you all I can. I am the wife of Sir Eustace Brackenstall. I have been married about a year. I suppose that it is no use attempting to conceal that our marriage has not been a happy one. I fear that all our neighbours would tell you that, even if I were to attempt to *deny* it. Perhaps, the fault may be partly mine. I was brought up in the freer, less conventional atmosphere of South Australia, and this English life, with its proprieties and its primness, is not *congenial* to me. But the main reason lies in one fact, which is notorious to everyone, and that is that Sir Eustace was a confirmed drunkard. To be with such a man for an hour is unpleasant. Can you imagine what it means for a sensitive and high-spirited woman to be tied to him for day and night? It is a *sacrilege*, a crime, villainy to hold that such a marriage is binding. I say that these monstrous laws of yours will bring a curse upon the land – God will not let such wickedness endure.”

For an instant she sat up, her cheeks flushed, and her eyes blazing from under the terrible mark upon her brow. Then the strong, soothing hand of the *austere* maid drew her head down on to the cushion, and the wild anger died away into passionate sobbing. At last she continued, “I will tell you about last night. You are aware, perhaps, that in this house, all the servants sleep in the modern wing. This central block is made up of the dwelling rooms, with the kitchen behind and our bedroom above. My maid, Theresa, sleeps above my room. There is no one else, and no sound could alarm those who are in the farther wing. This must have been

Congenial -
Agreeable
Hideous - Horrible
Shudder - Tremble
Vivid - Bright
Deny - Reject and
refuse
Sacrilege -
Disrespect
Austere - Severe

well known to the robbers, or they would not have acted as they did.

“Sir Eustace retired about half-past ten. The servants had already gone to their quarters. Only my maid was up, and she had remained in her room at the top of the house until I needed her services. I sat until after eleven in this room, absorbed in a book. Then I walked around to see that all was right before I went upstairs. It was my *custom* to do this myself, for, as I have explained, Sir Eustace was not always to be trusted. I went into the kitchen, the butler’s pantry, the gun room, the billiard room, the drawing room, and finally, the dining room. As I approached the window, which is covered with thick curtains, I suddenly felt the wind blow upon my face and realised that it was open. I flung the curtain aside and found myself face to face with a broad-shouldered elderly man, who had just stepped into the room. The window is a long French one, which really forms a door leading to the lawn. I held my bedroom candle lit in my hand, and, by its light, behind the first man, I saw two others, who were also entering. I stepped back, but the fellow was on me in an instant. He caught me first by the wrist and then by the throat. I opened my mouth to scream, but he struck me a savage blow with his fist over the eye, and felled me to the ground. I must have been unconscious for a few minutes, for when I came to myself, I found that they had torn down the bell rope, and had secured me tightly to the oaken chair which stands at the head of the dining table. I was so firmly bound that I could not move, and a handkerchief around my mouth prevented me from uttering a sound. It was at this instant that my unfortunate husband entered the room. He had evidently heard some *suspicious* sounds, and he came prepared for such a scene as he found. He was dressed in nightshirt and trousers, with his favourite blackthorn cudgel in his hand. He rushed at the burglars, but another – it was an elderly man – stooped, picked the *poker* out of the *grate* and struck him a horrible blow as he passed. He fell with a *groan* and never moved again. I fainted once more, but again it could only have been for a very few minutes during which I was *insensible*. When I opened my eyes, I found that they had collected the silver from the sideboard, and they had drawn a bottle of wine which stood there. Each of them had a glass in his hand. I have already told you, have I not, that

Custom – Tradition
Suspicious –
Doubtful
Groan – Cry out
Insensible – Not
sensitive, without
sense

one was elderly, with a beard, and the others young, hairless lads. They might have been a father with his two sons. They talked together in whispers. Then they came over and made sure that I was securely bound. Finally they withdrew, closing the window after them. It was quite a quarter of an hour before I got my mouth free. When I did so, my screams brought the maid to my assistance. The other servants were soon alarmed, and we sent for the local police, who instantly communicated with London. That is really all that I can tell you, gentlemen, and I trust that it will not be necessary for me to go over so painful a story again."

"Any questions, Mr. Holmes?" asked Hopkins.

"I will not *impose* any further tax upon Lady Brackenstall's patience and time," said Holmes.

"Before I go into the dining room, I should like to hear your experience." He looked at the maid.

"I saw the men before they came into the house," said she. "As I sat by my bedroom window, I saw three men in the moonlight down by the lodge gate yonder, but I thought nothing of it at the time. It was more than an hour after that I heard my mistress scream, and down I ran, to find her, poor lamb, just as she says, and him on the floor, with his blood and brains over the room. It was enough to drive a woman out of her wits, tied there, and her very dress spotted with him, but she never wanted *courage*, did Miss Mary Fraser of Adelaide and Lady Brackenstall of Abbey Grange hasn't learned new ways. You've questioned her long enough, you gentlemen, and now she is coming to her own room, just with her old Theresa, to get the rest that she badly needs."

With a motherly *tenderness*, the *gaunt* woman put her arm around her mistress and led her from the room.

"She has been with her all her life," said Hopkins. "Nursed her as a baby, and came with her to England when they first left Australia, eighteen months ago. Theresa Wright is her name, and the kind of maid you don't pick up nowadays. This way Mr. Holmes, if you please!"

The keen interest had passed out of Holmes's expressive face, and I knew that with the mystery, all the charm of the case had departed. There still remained an arrest to be effected, but what were these commonplace rogues that he should soil his hands with them? An *abstruse* and learned specialist who

Impose – Force
Courage – Bravery
Tenderness –
Softness
Gaunt – Thin
Abstruse – Complex

finds that he has been called in for a case of measles would experience something of the annoyance which I read in my friend's eyes. Yet the scene in the dining room of the Abbey Grange was sufficiently strange to arrest his attention and to recall his *waning* interest.

It was a very large and high chamber, with carved oak ceiling, oaken panelling, and a fine *array* of deer's heads and ancient weapons around the walls. At the other end from the door, was the high French window of which we had heard. Three smaller windows on the right-hand side filled the apartment with cold winter sunshine. On the left was a large, deep fireplace, with a *massive*, overhanging oak *mantelpiece*. Beside the fireplace was a heavy oaken chair with arms and crossbars at the bottom. In and out through the open wood-work was woven a crimson cord, which was secured at each side to the crosspiece below. In releasing the lady, the cord had been slipped off her, but the knots with which it had been secured still remained. These details only struck our attention afterwards, for our thoughts were entirely absorbed by the terrible object which lay upon the tiger skin *hearthrug* in front of the fire.

It was the body of a tall, well-built man, about forty years of age. He lay upon his back, his face upturned, with his white teeth grinning through his short, black beard. His two clenched hands were raised above his head, and a heavy, blackthorn stick lay across them. His dark, handsome, *aquiline* features were convulsed into a spasm of *vindictive* hatred, which had set his dead face in a terribly *fiendish* expression. He had evidently been in his bed when the alarm had broken out, for he wore a *foppish*, embroidered nightshirt, and his bare feet projected from his trousers. His head was horribly injured, and the whole room bore witness to the savage ferocity of the blow which had struck him down. Beside him lay the heavy poker, bent into a curve by the *concussion*. Holmes examined both, the poker and the indescribable wreck which it had wrought.

"He must be a powerful man, this elder Randall," he remarked.

"Yes," said Hopkins. "I have some record of the fellow, and he is a rough customer."

"You should have no difficulty in getting him."

Mantelpiece - Shelf
Array - Decorated
Waning - To decrease
concussion - End
wreck - Demolish
Hearthrug - A rug
near a fireplace
Massive - Huge
Aquiline - Curved or
Hooked shape
Vindictive - Cruel
Fiendish - Devilish