

Sherlock Holmes

One night, I was returning from a journey to a patient when my way *led*¹ me through Baker Street. I wanted to see Holmes again. His rooms were brilliantly *lit*², and even as I looked up, I saw his tall, thin figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the curtain. To me, who knew his every *mood*³ and *habit*⁴, his behaviour told its own story. He was at work again. I rang the bell, and was taken up to the room which once had been in part my own.

He was glad, I think, to see me. He asked me to sit in a chair, then stood before the fire and looked me over.

"Marriage *suits*⁵ you," he remarked. "I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you last."

"Seven," I answered.

"Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a little more, Watson. And you're working again, I see. You did not tell me you intended to get married."

"Then how did you know?"

"I see it, I *deduce*⁶ it. How do I know that you have been getting very wet lately, and that you have a most *careless*⁷ servant girl?"

"My dear Holmes," said I, "this is too much. You would certainly have been burned if you had lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I went for a country walk on Thursday and came home in a terrible mess; but as I have changed my clothes, I can't imagine how you deduce it. As to Mary Jane, our servant girl, I can do nothing with her, and my wife wants *to be rid*⁸ of her; but there again I *fail*⁹ to see how you worked it out."



Holmes laughed and rubbed his long hands together. "It's simple," he said. "My eyes tell me that there are six parallel cuts on the inside of your left shoe. *Obviously*¹⁰ they have been caused by someone who has very carelessly *scraped*¹¹ round the *edges*¹² of the shoe to get mud off it. As to your work, if a gentleman walks into my rooms smelling of iodoform, with a *bulge*¹³ on the side of his hat to show where he has hidden his stethoscope, I must be *dull*¹⁴ indeed if I cannot tell that he is a doctor."

I could not help laughing. "When I hear you give your reasons," I remarked, "it always appears so simple that I could do it myself. And yet, I believe my eyes are as good as yours."

"Quite so," he answered, sitting down. "You see, but you do not *observe*¹⁵. For example, you have often seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room." "Very often." "How often?" "Well, some hundred times." "Then, how many are there?" "How many? I don't know." "Quite so. You have not observed. And yet you have seen. Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed."

Words and what they mean

1 *to lead, led, led*

2 *to light, lit, lit*

3 *mood*

4 *habit*

5 *to suit someone*

6 *to deduce*

here: if your way takes you in a certain direction it leads you there

to make light which makes an object or area bright or easy to see

the way you feel at a certain time, (*good mood, bad mood*)

something which you do often and regularly

to be convenient for someone

e.g.: "*How about eight o'clock outside the cinema?*" "*That suits me fine.*"

to find an answer to a problem by thinking carefully about the known facts

Words and what they mean (cont.)

7 <i>careless</i>	opposite of careful
8 <i>to be rid of s.o.</i>	to be free of an unpleasant thing or person
9 <i>to fail</i>	you fail if you do not succeed in what you are trying
10 <i>obvious(ly)</i>	clear, easy to see
11 <i>to scrape</i>	to rub against a surface so that there is slight damage
12 <i>edge</i>	the outer point of something
13 <i>bulge</i>	a curved shape sticking out from the surface of something e.g.: <i>I wondered what the bulge in her coat pocket was.</i>
14 <i>dull</i>	here: stupid
15 <i>to observe</i>	to look or watch carefully

Task

1. Who tells the story?
2. What characters appear in the scene?
3. Where and when does the scene take place?
4. What does Holmes deduce from the appearance of his friend?
5. What lesson does Holmes teach his friend?

Notes

Additional assignments

1. A different title for the scene could be: Dr Watson learns a lesson. Use this title and write a single sentence that describes the whole scene.
2. Holmes writes in his diary about the evening. Write not more than 10 sentences about the evening from Holmes's point of view. Mention only the things that would be important for Holmes.