

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Boscombe Valley Mystery



free Audiobook



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The Boscombe Valley Mystery

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About the author

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is the creator of one of the world's most famous and popular detectives, **Sherlock Holmes**.

Conan Doyle was born in **Edinburgh**, Scotland, on 22 May 1859. His mother introduced him to books when he was still a young boy, and he always loved reading. In 1876 he began studying medicine at Edinburgh University. One of his professors was Dr Joseph Bell, who surprised his students because he often knew a lot about his patients simply by looking at them. He was a careful observer of detail, and later he became Conan Doyle's model for Sherlock Holmes.

Conan Doyle became a doctor in 1882 and opened his first practice. However, he did not have many patients so he began writing his first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887). The story was a great success.

In 1891 the monthly magazine *The Strand* asked Conan Doyle to write six Sherlock Holmes stories. The clever detective and his friend **Dr Watson** soon became very popular in Great Britain.

However, Conan Doyle did not want to be famous *only* for his Sherlock Holmes stories. He wanted to be popular for his historical novels. So, in 1893 he wrote a story called *The Final Problem* and 'killed' Holmes. Conan Doyle's readers (including his mother!) were very angry, and *The Strand* lost about 20,000 readers.

Finally, in 1901 Conan Doyle decided to write another Sherlock Holmes adventure, a novel called *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. His readers were very pleased and he continued writing about the famous detective until 1927.

Conan Doyle's wonderful stories have been translated into sixty languages, and there have been many films, plays, and television programmes about Sherlock Holmes and his exciting adventures.

Some famous Sherlock Holmes books are *The Sign of Four* (1890), *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892), *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1905), *The Valley of Fear* (1915) and *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* (1927).

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle died in England on 7 July 1930.

Comprehension check

1 Answer the following questions.

- 1 When and where was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle born?
- 2 What did Conan Doyle study at university?
- 3 How did Dr Joseph Bell influence Conan Doyle?
- 4 Why did Conan Doyle start writing and what was his first story?
- 5 Why did the readers of *The Strand* get angry?
- 6 What happened in 1901?



British actors Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman, playing Sherlock Holmes and John Watson in BBC's series *Sherlock* (2010).

How did Sherlock Holmes and *Dr Watson become friends?*

Sherlock Holmes did not have much money when he moved to London in 1874. In 1881 he decided to share the rent of his rooms at **221B Baker Street** with **Dr John H. Watson**, and this is how they became good friends.

Dr Watson tells us many interesting and funny things about his friend, Sherlock Holmes. He tells us that he is a **quiet person** with regular habits, and is an easy person to live with. He usually goes to bed around ten at night and gets up very early in the morning.

Watson also tells us that he is **untidy** and his desk is always covered with papers. He likes difficult cases and when he works on them he has a lot of energy. But sometimes he gets bored and sits in the living room and does nothing. We know that Holmes **plays the violin** well, and often uses **chemistry equipment** to solve cases. He is one of the first detectives to use scientific methods – called forensic methods – such as microscopes, fingerprints,¹ footprints,² photographs and studies of handwriting (see page 64).

1. fingerprints:

2. footprints:



Watson and Holmes have a housekeeper, Mrs Hudson, who cooks and cleans for them. After a few years, however, Watson gets married and goes to live in another part of London. But they continue to work together.

Conan Doyle did not invent the address – the house at 221B Baker Street really exists! Today that house is *The Sherlock Holmes Museum*, which thousands of people visit every year.

Comprehension check

1 Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false ones.

	T	F
1 Dr Watson rented rooms to Sherlock Holmes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Sherlock Holmes is not a difficult person to live with.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Sherlock Holmes's desk is never tidy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Sherlock Holmes prefers easy cases.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Sherlock Holmes uses forensic methods to solve cases.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A C T I V I T I E S

The Characters



From left to right: John Turner, Dr John Watson, Sherlock Holmes, Detective Lestrade, James McCarthy, Alice Turner



CHAPTER ONE

A new case

O

ne morning I was having breakfast with my wife when a telegram arrived. It was from Sherlock Holmes and it said:



Are you free for a day or two? Must go to the west of England to help with the Boscombe Pool¹ murder. Will be glad if you can come with me. The air of the countryside will be good for us. Leaving Paddington Station on the 11.15 train.

My wife looked at me and asked, 'Will you go, dear?'

'I really don't know,' I answered. 'I have a lot of sick people to visit.'

'Oh, your assistant, Anstruther, can do the work for you,' said

1. **pool** : (here) a small lake in the woods.



CHAPTER ONE

my wife. 'You look a bit tired and I think the change will be good for you.'

'You're always right, my dear,' I said, smiling at my wife. 'If I have to go, I must get ready immediately — the train leaves in half an hour.'

My early life as a soldier taught me how to travel with very few things. In five minutes I was on my way to Paddington Station, where I met Sherlock Holmes. He was wearing his long grey coat and his favourite hat.

'I'm glad you came, Watson,' he said. 'At times like this, I need a friend like you to help me. You find the seats and I'll buy the tickets.'

We were alone during the train ride. Holmes read a lot of newspapers and then put them away.

'Do you know anything about this case?' Holmes asked me.

'No, I don't,' I answered. Of course, I wanted to know more.

'The London papers didn't write much about it,' said Holmes. 'I read them all because I need to know all the facts. This case seems to be very clear, and that's why I think it will be difficult.'

'That's strange,' I said.

'No, it's not,' said Holmes. 'Cases which seem easy like this one are the most difficult. At the moment things look bad for the son of the murdered man.'

'Oh, really!' I said. 'Was it a murder then?'

'It seems to be a murder, but I'm not sure,' said Holmes, thoughtfully. 'I must study all the facts. Now I'll tell you what I read in the papers.'

'Yes, please do,' I replied.

'Boscombe Valley is near Ross in Herefordshire,'² said Holmes.

2. **Herefordshire**: a county in the West Midlands.



‘Oh, really?’ I said. ‘I didn’t know that.’

‘Yes, a big part of the land there belongs to John Turner, who made a lot of money in Australia. He returned to England many years ago.

‘His neighbour, Charles McCarthy, who was also from Australia, lived at Hatherley Farm. The farm belongs to Mr Turner and Mr McCarthy paid rent for the use of the farm. They seemed to be good friends and spent a lot of time together. McCarthy has a son of eighteen, and Turner has a daughter of about the same age. The wives of both men are dead. McCarthy had two servants in his house, but Turner has many more — about six.’

‘What about the murder, then?’ I asked, as I wanted to know more.

‘Last Monday morning, 3 June, Charles McCarthy went to the town of Ross with his servant,’ explained Holmes calmly. ‘He told his servant that he had an important meeting with someone at three o’clock at Boscombe Valley that afternoon. They went back to Hatherley quickly and before three o’clock McCarthy left his house and went to Boscombe Pool alone. However, he never came back.’

‘Oh!’ I said, surprised.

‘It’s a quarter of a mile³ from Hatherley Farm to Boscombe Pool and two people saw McCarthy walking there. One was an old woman and the other was William Crowder.’

‘Who’s William Crowder?’ I asked.

‘He was one of Mr Turner’s servants’ replied Holmes, ‘a tall young man who told me many interesting things.’

‘Who was the old woman?’ I asked. ‘Do you know her name?’

3. a quarter of a mile: more or less 400 metres.

‘No, her name wasn’t mentioned,’ said Holmes. ‘However, both people said that McCarthy was alone. William Crowder said that after a few minutes he saw McCarthy’s son, James, going the same way. He had a gun under his arm and he was following his father.’

‘That’s interesting,’ I said, looking at Holmes. ‘Did anyone else see McCarthy?’

‘Another person, who lives nearby, saw the two McCarthys after William Crowder did,’ said Holmes.

‘And who was that?’ I asked.

‘A girl of fourteen named Patience Moran,’ replied Holmes.

‘What was she doing there?’ I asked.

‘She was picking flowers that afternoon and she saw the two men talking near the pool. They both looked very angry. She heard McCarthy shout at his son, who wanted to hit his father. Patience was frightened and ran away quickly. When she got home she told her mother everything. As she was speaking, she heard the voice of a man outside the door of their house. It was young McCarthy who shouted, “My father’s dead! Please help me!”’

At that moment the train stopped at a small station outside London. A few people got on the train and then it slowly left again.

The text and **beyond**

1 PRELIMINARY Comprehension check

For each question, choose the correct answer — A, B, C or D.

- 1 What was Watson doing when the telegram arrived?
A He was visiting his patients.
B He was having breakfast with his wife.
C He was writing a letter to his wife.
D He was talking to his assistant, Anstruther.
- 2 Where was Watson going to meet his friend, Sherlock Holmes?
A near Ross
B in the west of England
C at Boscombe Pool
D at Paddington Station
- 3 Who owned most of the land in Boscombe Valley?
A William Crowder
B Charles McCarthy
C James McCarthy
D John Turner
- 4 How far was it from Hatherley Farm to Boscombe Pool?
A a quarter of a mile
B half a mile
C about a mile
D two miles
- 5 Who went to the Morans' house and asked for help?
A Patience Moran
B William Crowder
C James McCarthy
D John Turner

2 Odd one out

A Circle the word that doesn't belong and explain why.

- 1 town – village – farm – city
- 2 minutes – time – hours – seconds
- 3 watch – coat – trousers – shirt
- 4 head – hat – arm – leg
- 5 soldier – teacher – detective – neighbour
- 6 Australia – England – American – France

B Circle the odd words in the word square.

S	C	O	W	A	T	C	H	T	H	F	R	I	T
F	N	A	S	O	M	A	K	Y	T	I	M	E	L
O	O	E	R	R	C	E	A	M	E	A	O	I	L
H	X	P	I	P	S	S	R	A	F	A	R	M	D
L	A	O	B	G	E	F	I	I	K	A	B	Y	O
I	R	T	B	R	H	N	I	D	C	V	E	T	B
S	C	L	E	P	F	B	T	M	B	A	A	P	Y
H	K	Y	M	V	I	O	O	E	O	L	N	D	O
A	W	R	D	O	W	U	O	U	R	L	I	S	Z
S	A	A	F	I	E	L	D	R	R	P	U	H	S

C Fill in the gaps with the odd words.

- 1 Sherlock Holmes always wore a during the winter.
- 2 There were two tourists on the train.
- 3 Charles McCarthy lived on a
- 4 Dr Watson had no to waste.
- 5 Charles McCarthy was John Turner's
- 6 Dr Watson always looked at his because he was late.

When she got home she told her mother everything.

Time clauses show when something happens. They are introduced by **conjunctions**. Look at these examples, where the time clauses are in **italics** and the conjunctions are **underlined**.

- The children went to the park before it started raining.
- She wrote about her trip while she was travelling.
- The robbers ran away as soon as they saw the police.

3 Time clauses

Complete the following sentences with a time clause from the box below.

before after while until when as soon as

- Watson read the newspaper Sherlock Holmes was thinking about the new case.
- Watson left for the train station he packed his bag.
- 'Study the map you visit London,' said Mrs Moran.
- 'Let's work six o'clock, and then we can have dinner,' said Sherlock Holmes.
- Patience Moran was frightened she saw the two men fighting.
- They ran home the big storm started.

Before you read



track 03

1 PRELIMINARY Listening

Listen to the first part of Chapter Two and decide if the sentences are correct or incorrect. If the sentence is correct, choose the letter A for YES. If it is not correct, choose the letter B for NO.

A B

- Patience Moran said that James McCarthy had a gun in his hand.
- Mr Charles McCarthy's body was found at Boscombe Pool.
- Watson thought that young McCarthy was innocent.
- Miss Turner was Detective Lestrade's cousin.
- Watson read the Herefordshire paper.
- James McCarthy was in London for three days.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>