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# Sherlock Holmes: The Speckled Band

*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

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# 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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Sherlock Holmes: The Speckled Band

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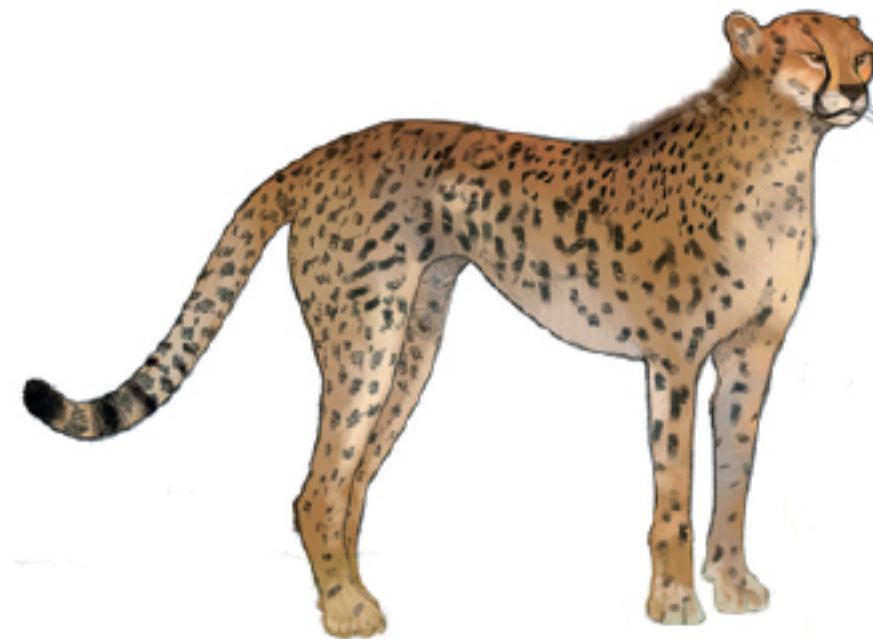
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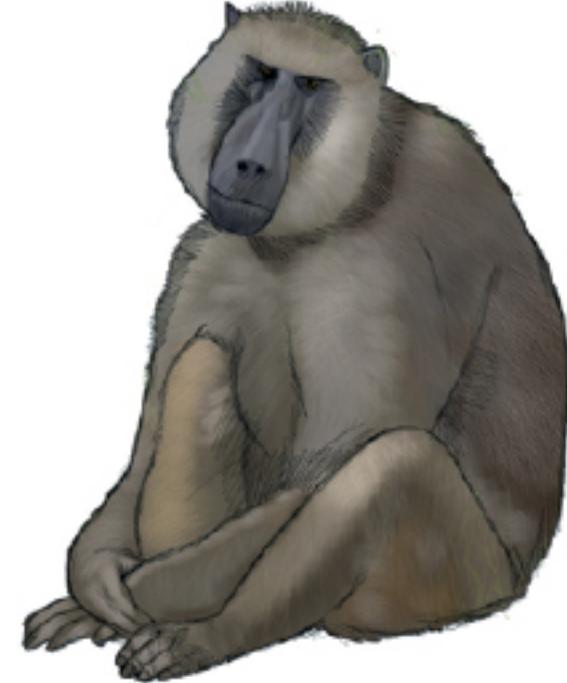
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# ACTIVITIES

## BEFORE READING

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

a  prison

b  marry

c  inn

d  lamp



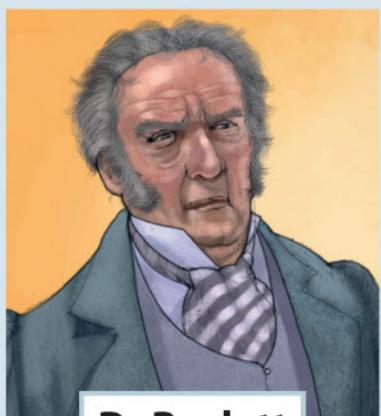
### 2 What do you think happens in the story? Complete the sentences with the words from Activity 1 in the correct form.

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

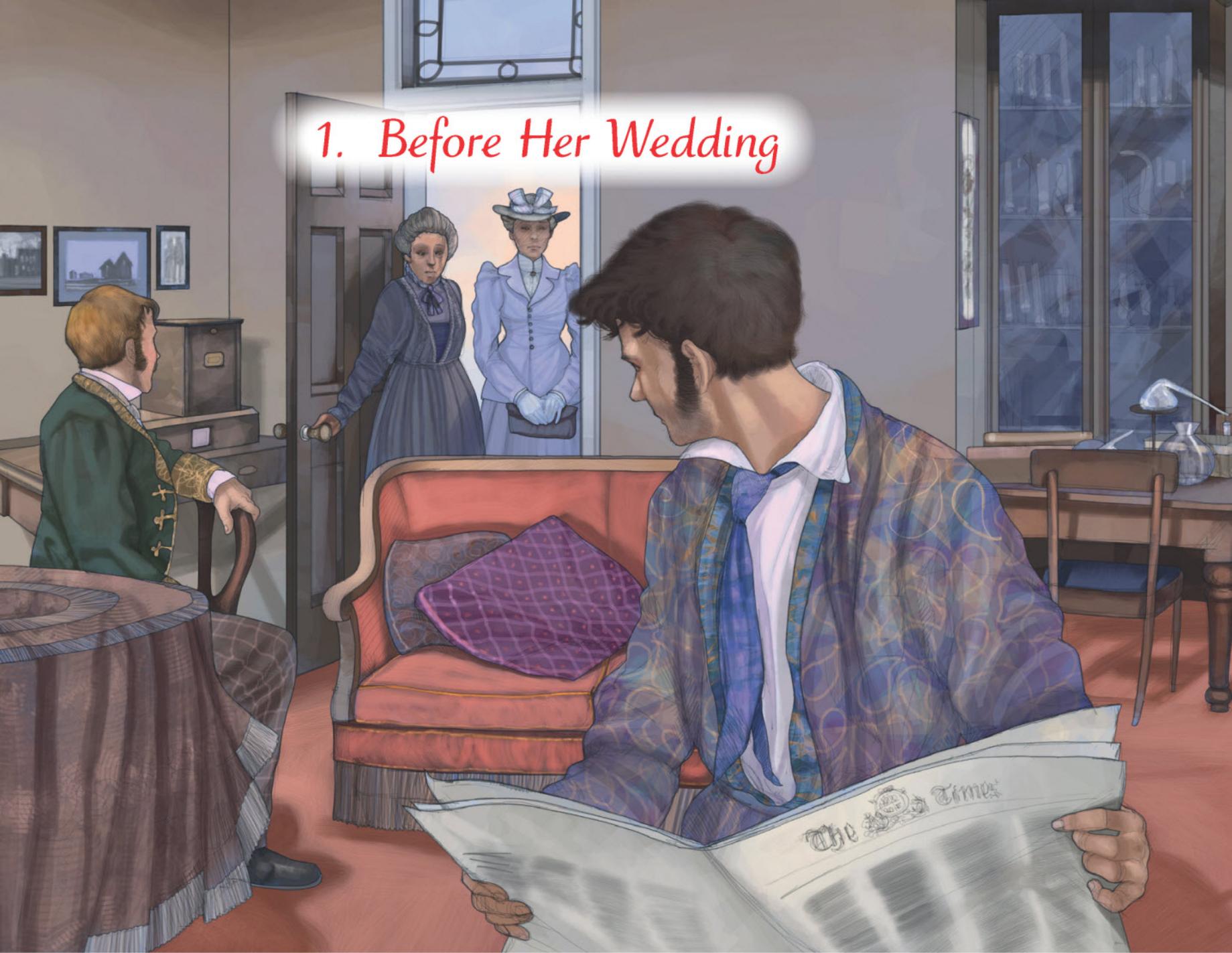


Sherlock Holmes



Dr Watson

## 1. Before Her Wedding



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

'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



Holmes thinks for a minute.

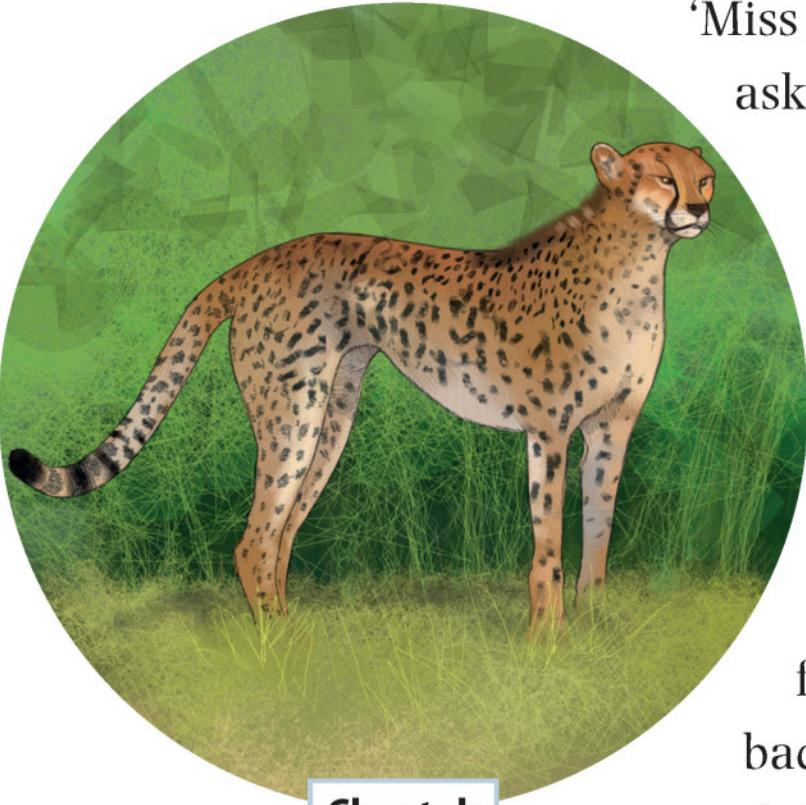
*'Now I remember the story of that family. Grimesby Roylott goes to India and he's an important doctor in **Calcutta** for many years. He marries a woman with two young children. One day, there is a **robbery** in his house. Roylott is angry with one of his servants, he hits him and the man dies. Roylott 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





'Miss Stoner, why are you afraid?' Holmes asks.

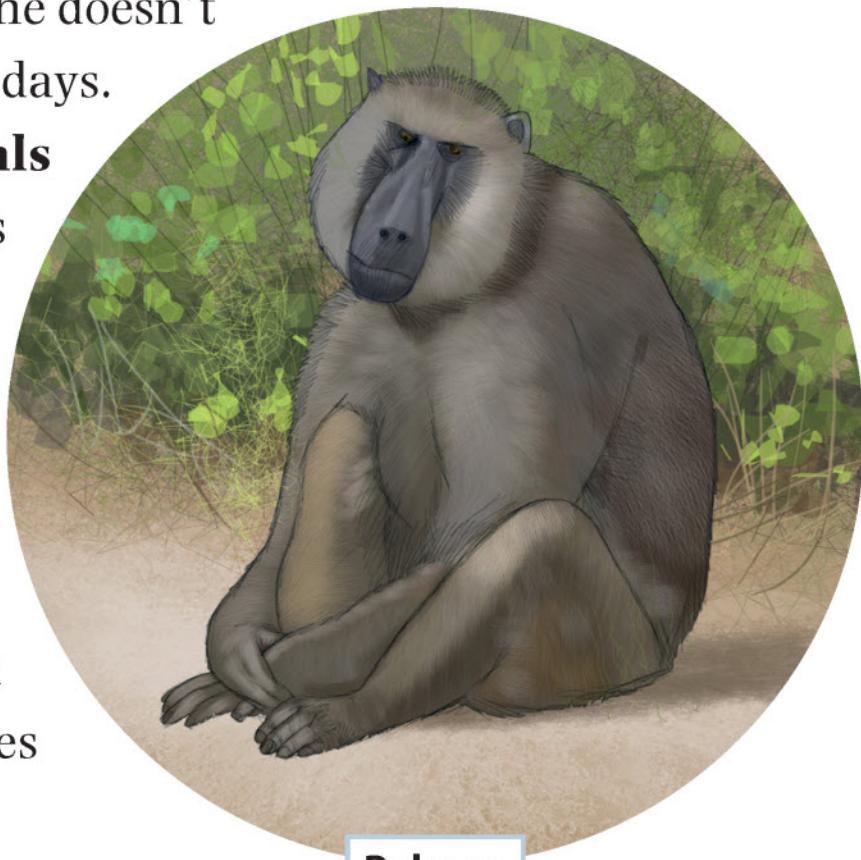
'My stepfather is a different man now, a very unhappy man. He is always angry and everybody is afraid of him, not only me. His only friends are the **gypsies**. They sleep near the house. He sometimes goes away with them for many weeks. When he comes back, he doesn't

speak for days.

**Cheetah**

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.



**Baboon**

'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.

**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

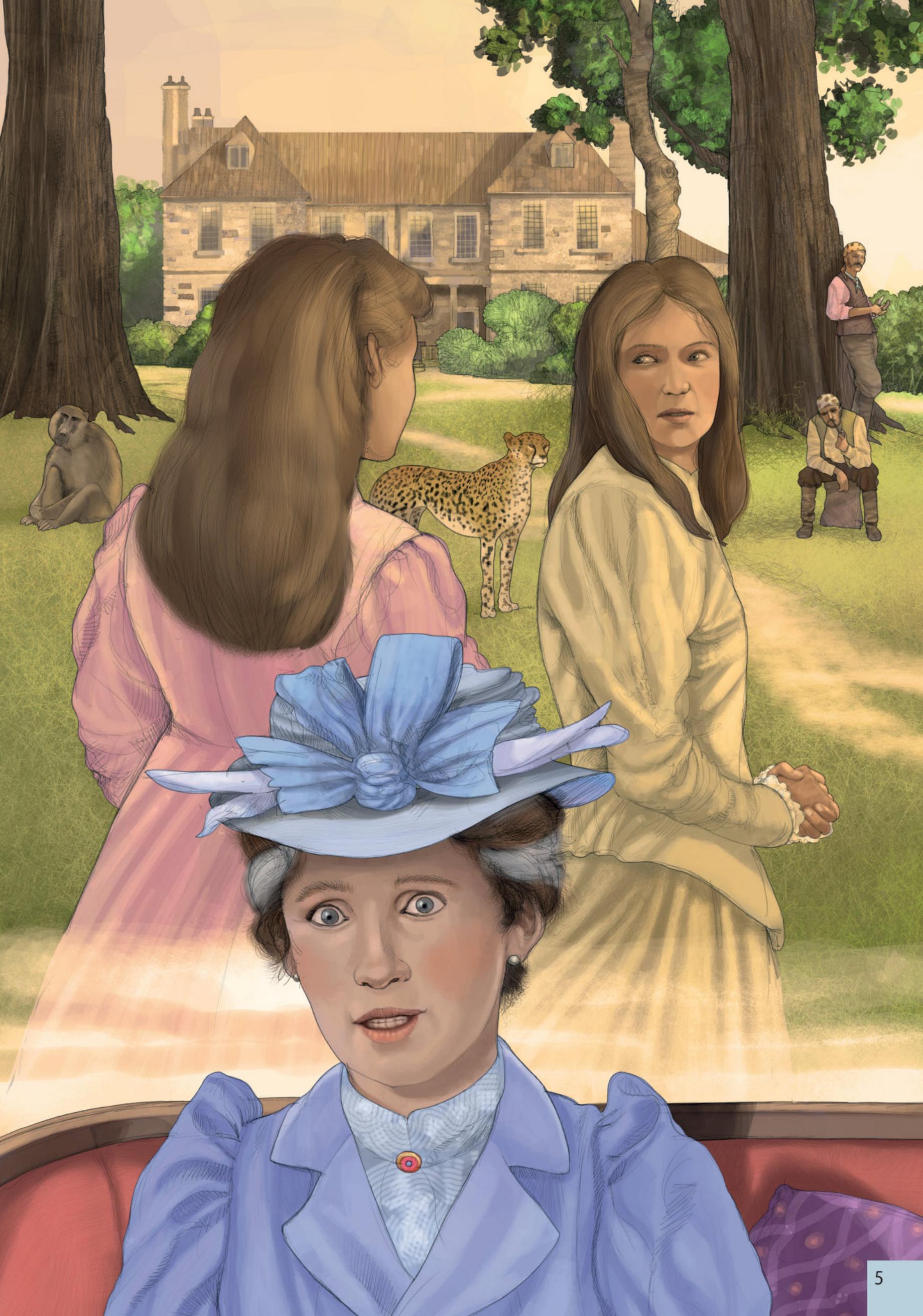
**terrible** very bad; making people afraid

**alone** with nobody

**wedding** the day when two people marry

**sad** not happy

**death** when someone stops living



# ACTIVITIES

## READING CHECK

Match the people in Chapter 1 with the sentences. You can use some names more than once.



- a ...*Mrs. Hudson*... opens the door and speaks to Sherlock Holmes.
- b ..... is a young woman but she looks old.
- c ..... is a good friend to Sherlock Holmes.
- d Helen Stoner is afraid of.....
- e ..... remembers the story of the Roylott family.
- f ..... wants to marry an old friend.
- g Helen tells..... and Dr Watson about Dr Roylott.

## WORD WORK

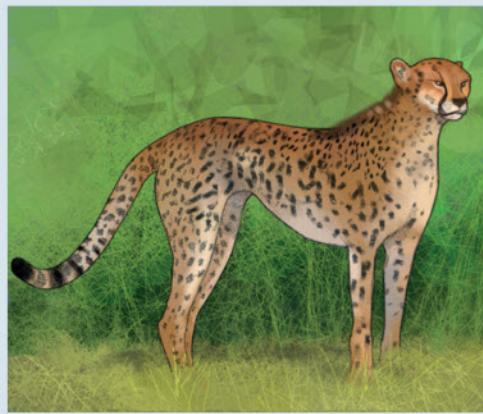
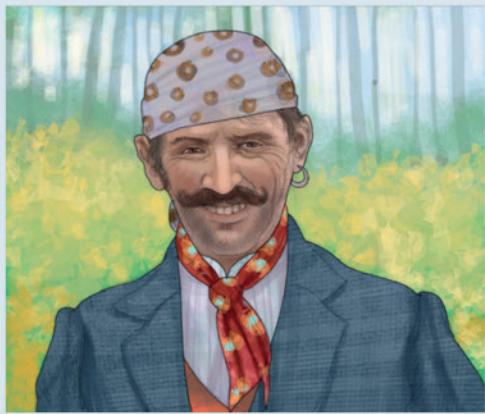
1 Find words from Chapter 1 to match the pictures.



a .....*sad*.....

b .....

c .....



d .....

e .....

f .....

# ACTIVITIES

## 2 Use the words in the safe to complete the sentences.



- a Watson is a ... **doctor** .....
- b Helen says '..... Julia' because she feels sorry for her sister.
- c The cheetah is a very fast .....
- d Dr Roylott marries Helen's mother so he is Helen's .....
- e When Julia dies, Helen is ..... at Stoke Moran.
- f Julia's death is a ..... thing for Helen.
- g Julia dies only two weeks before her .....

## GUESS WHAT

**What happens in the next chapter? Tick two boxes.**

- a  Helen tells Holmes about her sister's death.
- b  Holmes cannot help Helen.
- c  Helen dies in Watson's arms.
- d  Helen feels much better.

## 2. The Old House



**imagine** to see pictures in your head

**ground floor** where you walk when you first go into a building

**corridor** you can walk from room to room along this

**Indian** /'ɪndiən/

**incense** a very small fire; it makes a smell

**smell** when your nose tells you that something is nice or not

'I remember everything very well,' Miss Stoner says. '**Imagine** that big, old house. Our bedrooms are on the **ground floor**. The first bedroom is Dr Roylott's, the second is Julia's, and the third is my room. All three have doors to the **corridor**, and their windows look over the garden.'

That terrible night, Julia is in my room. She can't sleep because Dr Roylott is in his room and, as usual, he has his **Indian incense**. Julia can **smell** the incense from her room and she doesn't like it. Julia is going to marry soon and we are talking about the wedding. I am happy for her, but I don't want to be alone at Stoke Moran. At eleven o'clock, before she goes to bed, she asks me a question.

'Helen, do you ever hear a **whistling** noise at night? I sometimes hear it at three o'clock in the morning. Perhaps it comes from the next room or from the garden.'

'No,' I say, 'but I usually sleep better than you. It's nothing, Julia, forget about it. Goodnight, my dear.'

That night is different and I don't sleep well. I feel ill and I can hear the rain against my window. At three in the morning, there is a terrible cry. It's my sister! I run from my room into the corridor. I hear a whistling noise and then a **metallic** noise. Julia is standing at the door of her room. Her face is white and very afraid. I run to her and I take her in my arms. She cries, 'Helen! It's the band! The speckled band!' They are her last words. I call for my stepfather and he runs out of his room. He gives her water and calls for the doctor, but nothing can help Julia. My poor sister dies soon after that. The **police** don't find any **marks** on her body. Oh Mr Holmes, her death is very, very **strange**'.

**whistle** a musical noise than you can make with your mouth

**metallic** made of metal; made by metal

**police** men and women who stop people doing bad things

**mark** something of a different colour that you see on something

**strange** not usual



'And what do you think, Miss Stoner?' Holmes asks.

'I don't know. Perhaps the gypsies are 'the speckled band?' But our windows have **bars** on them, because Dr Roylott is afraid of robberies. Every night we **lock** our doors. Nobody can go into our rooms. I am here with you now, Mr Holmes, because two years after Julia's death, strange things are happening again. A dear friend, Percy Armitage, wants to marry me. My stepfather is not against the wedding. Some men are working in the house, so I am sleeping in Julia's old room. I often sleep badly because I think a lot about my sister. Imagine my feelings at three

**bar** a long, thick, flat piece of metal

**lock** this makes a door stay closed



o'clock this morning when I hear a strange whistling noise! I get up quickly and **light** the **lamp** but there is nothing in the room. After that I can't sleep so I take the train to London and here I am!

'I want to go to Stoke Moran today,' Holmes says. 'I must see the house. Is this a good time?'

Miss Stoner smiles. 'Yes. My stepfather is in London all day. I am going back home on the twelve o'clock train so I can see you there this afternoon. Thank you, Mr Holmes. I feel much better now!'

**light** a thing that helps you to see in the dark; to give fire to something

**lamp** a thing that helps you to see in the dark



# ACTIVITIES

## READING CHECK

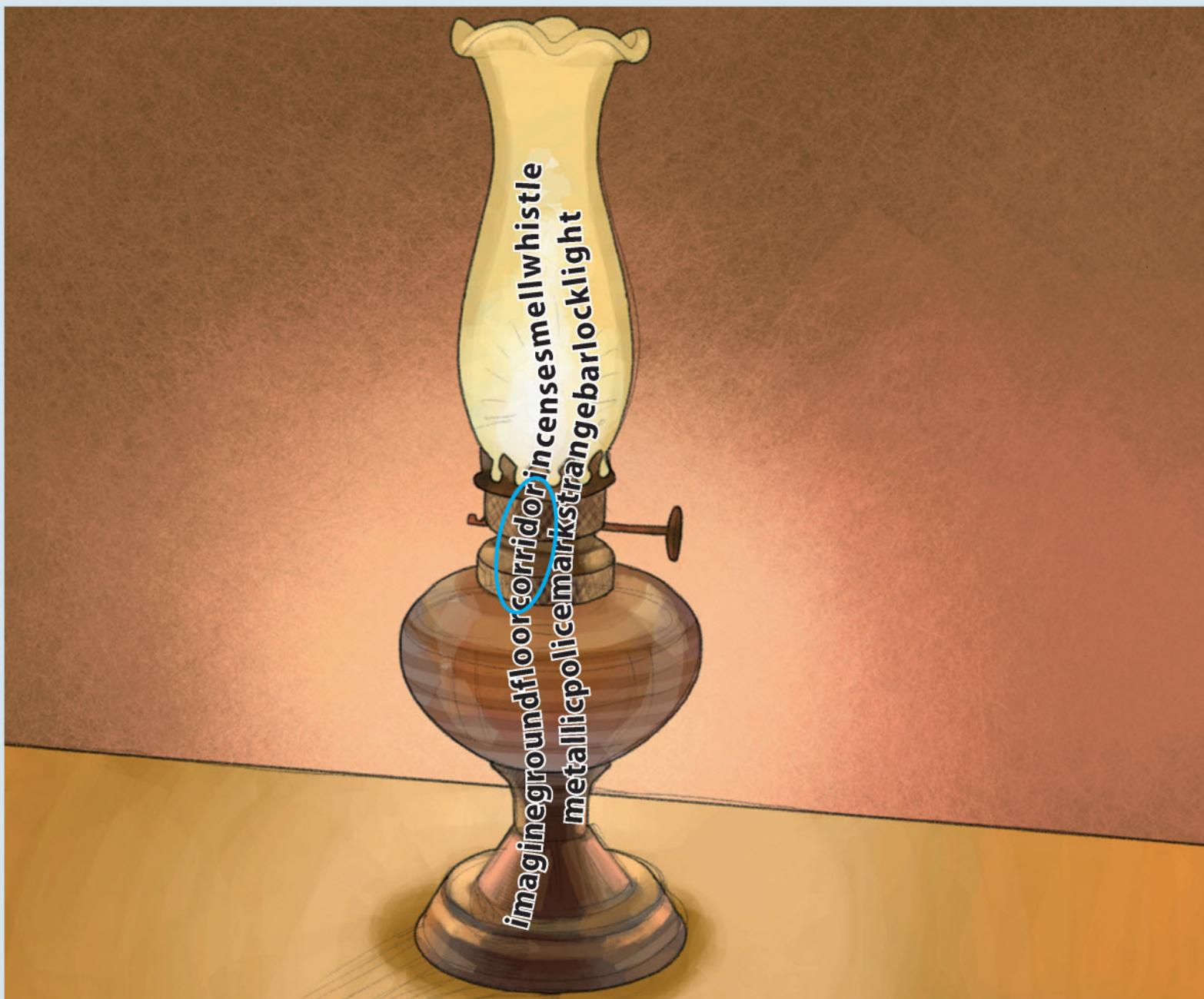
Are these sentences true or false? Tick the boxes.

True False

- a Julia talks to Helen about her wedding.
- b Dr Roylott is in his bedroom.
- c Helen sleeps very well that night.
- d Julia is very afraid of something.
- e Julia's last words are 'help me!'
- f Dr Roylott gives Julia something to eat.
- g Helen wants to marry Percy Armitage.
- h Helen hears a noise at three o'clock in the morning.

## WORD WORK

1 Find words from Chapter 2 in the lamp.



# ACTIVITIES

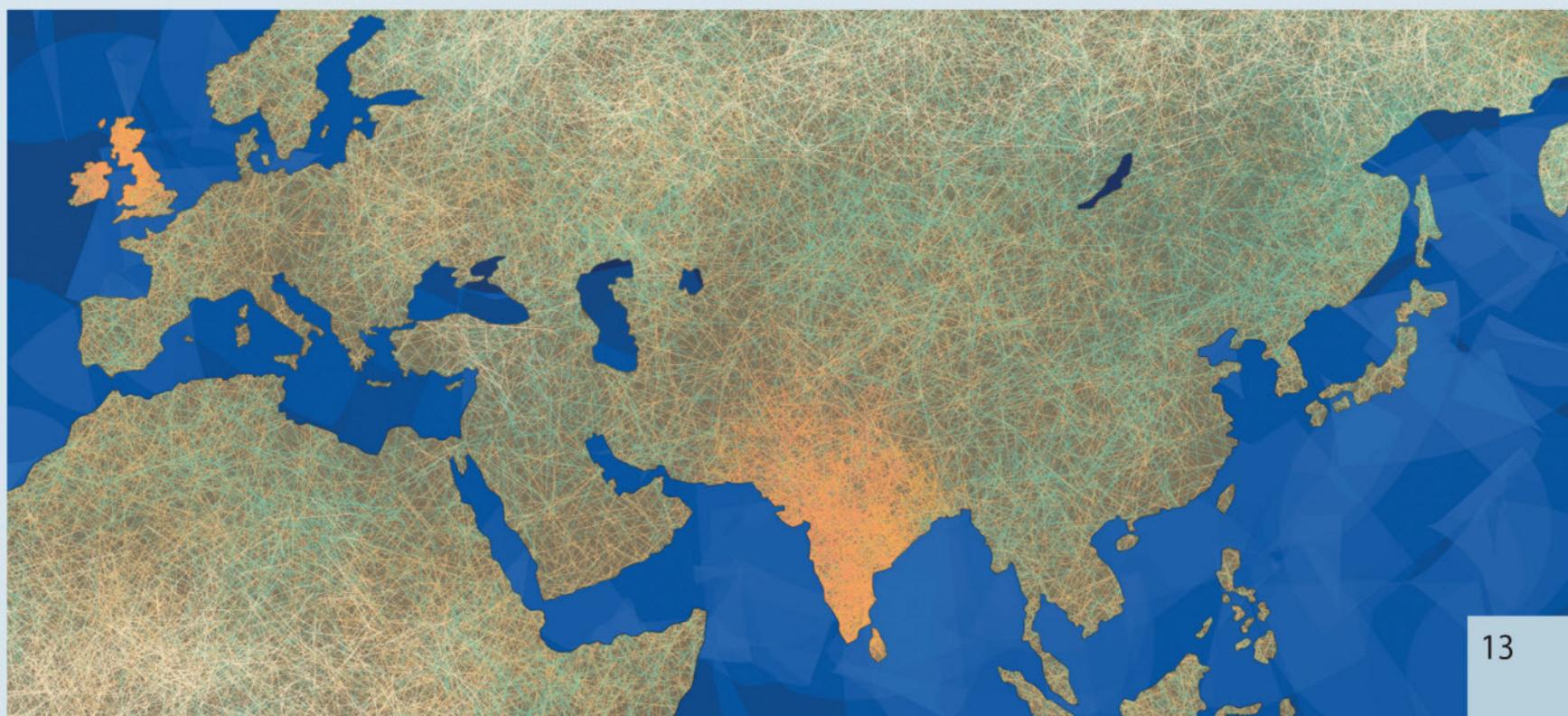
## 2 Complete the sentences with the words from Activity 1 in the correct form.

- a His office is on the ... **ground floor** ... of the building.
- b I love the ..... of these flowers.
- c I can see a yellow ..... through the dark trees.
- d They have a lot of ..... in India.
- e It's better to ..... your door when you go out.
- f The room is on the right of the .....
- g The ..... can help when there is a robbery.
- h It isn't easy to ..... when you are eating!
- i Can you ..... a worse thing than murder?
- j There are ..... on the windows from the rain.
- k What's that ..... animal over there?
- l It isn't easy to get in the building because there are ..... on the window.
- m That ..... noise is an angry little boy hitting his bicycle.

## GUESS WHAT

**What happens in the next chapter? Choose the words to complete the sentences.**

- a Holmes and Watson talk about Julia's *death / wedding*.
- b Roylott visits Holmes and he is *happy / angry*.
- c Holmes is *afraid / not afraid* of Roylott.
- d Roylott's wife gives *money / books* to her family.
- e Holmes and Watson go by *train / bus* to Stoke Moran.



### 3. Dr Grimesby Roylott

'What do you think of all this, Watson?' Holmes asks.

'It's very strange, Holmes. On the night of her death, Julia is alone in her room, her sister tells us. There is only one door and it goes into the corridor. The sisters always lock their doors. There is a window and a **chimney**, but they have bars on them. How can anyone get in?'

'Yes,' Holmes says. 'And we must remember the strange whistling, the metallic noise, and Julia's last words. Can the gypsies be **guilty**? They sometimes wear bands around their heads and those bands have speckles or marks on them.'

**chimney** smoke from a fire goes outside through a chimney

**guilty** doing something bad

'A band is also a number of people,' Watson says quietly.

'That's true,' Holmes says. 'Roylott is very friendly with the gypsies. He also loses money when his stepdaughters marry. That's important.'



'Helen speaks of a metallic noise. Is it perhaps the noise of something against the metal bars on the window?' Watson asks.

'I don't know, but we need to see those bedrooms quickly,' Holmes says.

Just then, the door opens suddenly and a very big man comes quickly into the room. He is wearing a tall, black hat and he has a **cane** in his hand.

His big face is red with the sun and he looks very angry.

'Which of you is Holmes?' he asks angrily.

'That is my name, sir,' Holmes answers quietly, 'but who are you?'

'I am Dr **Grimesby** Roylott of Stoke Moran,' the big man answers.

'Are you? Then please sit down,' Homes says.

'No!' Roylott cries. 'I want to know about my stepdaughter. What is she saying about me?'

'She isn't saying anything,' Holmes says.

'Don't play with me, sir,' Roylott cries angrily. 'I'm an important man. I know about Miss Stoner and I know all about you.'

**cane** this is long and made of wood. You use it to walk

**Grimesby** /graimzbi:/





Holmes smiles. ‘That’s interesting. But I must work now, and you must leave. Please close the door after you.’

Roylott does not leave. He walks to the chimney and takes the metal **poker** in his hands. He **bends** it quickly with his two big hands. Then he **throws** it down at his feet.  
‘I’m leaving because I want to leave, not because you tell me!’ he cries angrily. ‘Be careful, Mr Holmes!’

Then he walks out of the room, looking all the time at Holmes.

‘My poor poker,’ Holmes says quietly, walking to the chimney. He is not a big man, but he takes the poker and quickly unbends it again. Watson’s mouth opens and Holmes begins to laugh.

‘I’m not afraid of Roylott, Watson! But I need to know something about his wife’s **will**. I’m going out now.’



**poker** this is long and made of metal. You use it to move things in a fire

**bend** (past **bent**) to make something not straight

**throw** to make something move from your hand through the air

**will** the paper which says which people will have your money when you die

At one o'clock, Holmes comes back and he looks much happier. He has a paper in his hand with numbers on it.

'Look, Watson. This is the money from the dead wife's will. It's about £750 in today's money. £250 goes to Julia and £250 to Helen when they marry. That leaves very little for Dr Roylott. Is he our killer? We must move quickly. Helen is right to be afraid of her stepfather.'

Holmes and Watson go to Waterloo. They take a train to Leatherhead and from there they go by **trap** through the country. After a few miles, Holmes suddenly looks through the trees and he cries excitedly to his friend, 'There it is Watson! Do you see it?'

**trap** a little wooden car that a horse pulls



# ACTIVITIES

## READING CHECK

Put these sentences in order. Number them 1–8.

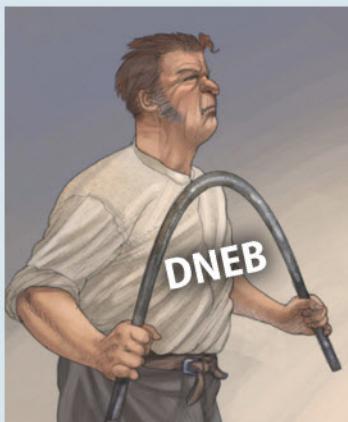
- a  Holmes and Watson take the train.
- b  They talk about 'the speckled band'.
- c  Sherlock goes out and comes back again.
- d  Holmes and Watson talk about Julia's death.
- e  Holmes laughs at Roylott.
- f  Roylott arrives at Holmes's house.
- g  Sherlock shows Watson a paper with numbers on it.
- h  Roylott leaves the house angrily.

## WORD WORK

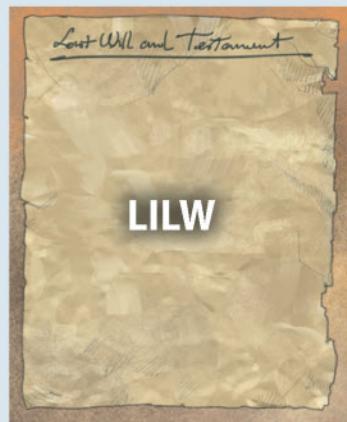
1 Look at the pictures and unscramble the words from Chapter 3.



a ..... *cane* .....



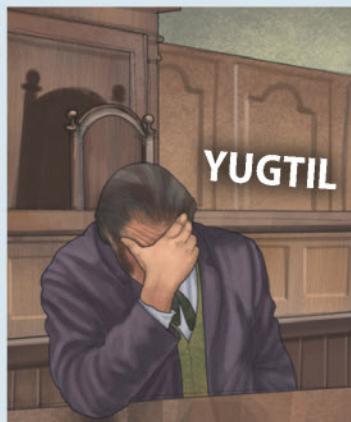
b ..... *Detective* .....



c ..... *will* .....



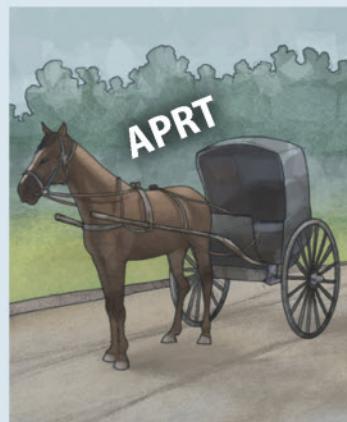
d ..... *Police* .....



e ..... *grief* .....



f ..... *worried* .....



g ..... *carriage* .....



h ..... *chimney* .....

# ACTIVITIES

## 2 Complete the sentences with words from Activity 1

- a That man can ..... a ..... poker ..... with his hands.
- b She is not ..... of her sister's death.
- c I'm giving you all my money in my .....
- d Don't hit anyone with that ..... It's wrong.
- e Little Sam can ..... his ball very well.
- f There's something moving in the ..... Can you hear it?
- g I must go to the station by .....

## GUESS WHAT

What happens in the next chapter? Tick the boxes.

Yes      No

- a Holmes and Watson visit Stoke Moran.
- b They meet Helen Stoner near the house.
- c They have a drink with Dr Roylott.
- d Holmes looks at the bars on Helen's window.
- e Helen kills her stepfather.
- f Holmes looks at Dr Roylott's room.
- g Holmes and Watson go to an inn.
- h Helen goes to the shops in London.

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



## 4. The Bedrooms



On a hill, the two men can see a big, old house.

‘Is it Stoke Moran?’ asks Watson.

The driver of the trap answers him. ‘Yes sir, that’s Stoke Moran, the house of Dr Grimesby Roylott.’

‘We can walk from here,’ Holmes says, and he gets down from the trap. A minute later, the two men meet Helen Stoner coming from the house. She is happy to see them but when she learns about Roylott’s visit her face changes.

‘My stepfather knows about my visit to you. Oh, no!’ she cries.

‘Don’t be afraid,’ Holmes says. ‘We are going to help you. From now, you must be very careful and you must lock your door at all times. Now take us to the house.’

They arrive at the big house. Holmes looks carefully at the windows to the bedrooms on the ground floor. He looks at Helen’s bedroom and the latest work there.

'Is this work on your bedroom important?' he asks Helen.  
'No, it isn't,' Helen answers. 'I don't understand it.'  
'Let's look at the bars on your window,' says Holmes. He takes out his knife. 'Perhaps I can open them.' He puts his knife to the bars but they don't move. 'No, I can't open them. Nobody can get in through here.'



Next, Holmes goes into Julia's bedroom. He looks slowly at everything. It is a little room without much **furniture**. Over the bed there is a long **bell-rope**.

'Which room can you call with the bell-rope?' Holmes asks Helen. 'It looks newer than the other things.'

**furniture** tables and chairs, for example

**bell-rope** you pull this to make a noise



'I don't know,' says Helen. 'I never need it.'

Holmes takes the bell-rope in his hand and **pulls** it. Nothing happens.

'This bell-rope doesn't go anywhere,' Holmes says excitedly.

'Now that's interesting. Look, it begins here, just over the small opening of the **ventilator**.'

'What a strange thing!' Helen cries.

'Yes,' Holmes says. He looks carefully at the ventilator. 'This is also new and it goes through to the next room. Why?'

Holmes, Watson, and Helen go into Dr Roylott's room. It is bigger than Julia's room with more furniture and a big metal **safe**. Holmes pulls the door of the safe, but it doesn't open.

'What's in here?' Holmes asks.

'My stepfather's papers,' Helen answers.

Holmes smiles. 'Is there perhaps a cat in there too?'

'Of course not!' Helen answers. 'Why do you ask?'

'I ask because there's some milk on the safe,' Holmes says.

'No, we don't have a cat. We have a cheetah and a baboon, of course.'

'Hmm,' Holmes says. 'That's very little milk for a cheetah. Oh, what's this?' He walks to the bed. On it there is a long **dog lead**.

'What do you think of that, Watson?' Holmes asks.

'Well,' Watson says. 'It isn't an unusual dog lead, but why is it in a **loop** like that?'

**pull** to move something nearer you

**ventilator** a hole for air to move through

**safe** a metal box that people put expensive things in

**dog lead** a rope for a dog - a person takes one end of this in their hand, the other end goes on the dog

**loop** a circle



Holmes's face is dark. 'Let's go out into the garden,' he says. 'I must think.'

Holmes walks up and down the garden for some minutes. Finally he looks at Helen and he says, 'You must listen carefully. Your life is in my hands.'

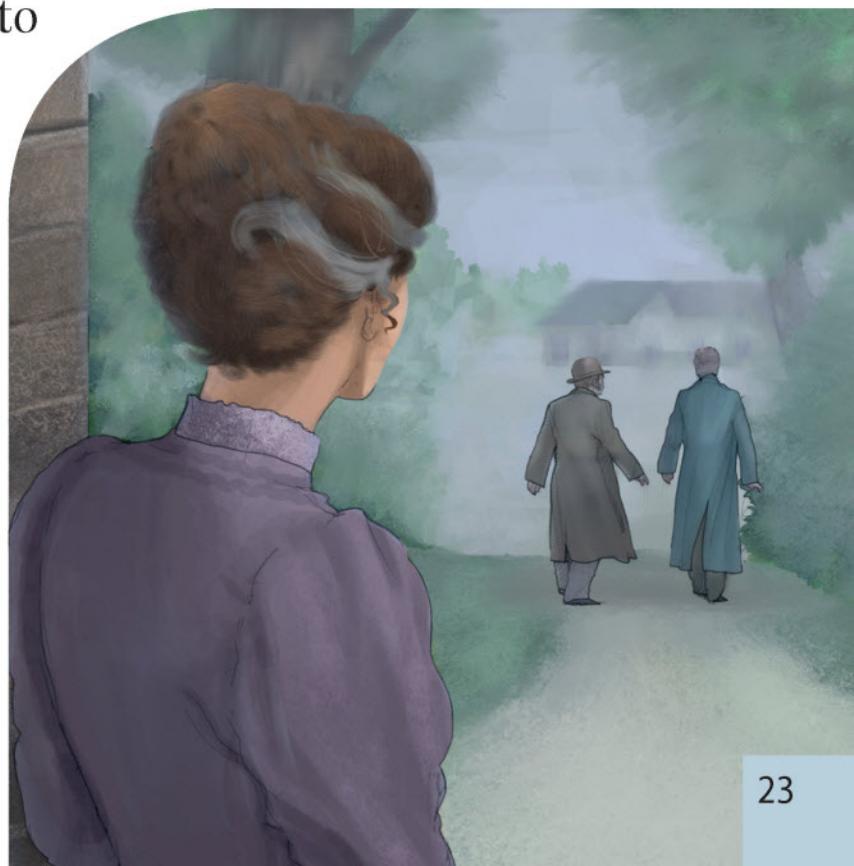
'Yes, Mr Holmes.'

'Your stepfather is coming home soon. Go to your room. Watson and I are going to the village **inn** over there. When Roylott goes to bed, light a lamp and put it in your window. We can see it from the inn. You must then go back to your old room. Watson and I are going to stay in Julia's room tonight.'

'You know more about Julia's death than you are saying, I think,' Helen says sadly. 'Can't you tell me anything?'

'No, I need to see more,' Holmes says. 'But I hope to know everything very soon. Now let's move quickly. We haven't much time.'

**inn** an old name for a hotel



# ACTIVITIES

## READING CHECK

Choose the best answer for each question.

a Why do Holmes and Watson walk to Stoke Moran?

- 1  Holmes is tired.
- 2  Watson feels ill.
- 3  The house isn't far.

b How does Helen feel about her stepfather's visit to London?

- 1  She is happy.
- 2  She is afraid.
- 3  She is sad.

c Why does Holmes ask about the work on Helen's bedroom?

- 1  He loves old buildings.
- 2  The work is interesting.
- 3  It is strange and he can't understand it.

d Why is the bell-rope strange?

- 1  It doesn't go anywhere.
- 2  Helen doesn't like it.
- 3  It looks old.

e Why does Holmes ask Helen about the cat?

- 1  He hates cats.
- 2  There is some milk on the safe.
- 3  Watson wants a cat.

f When must Helen put a lamp in the window?

- 1  When she goes to bed.
- 2  When Holmes and Watson go to bed.
- 3  When her stepfather goes to bed.



# ACTIVITIES

## WORD WORK

Choose the correct words from Chapter 4 to complete the sentences.



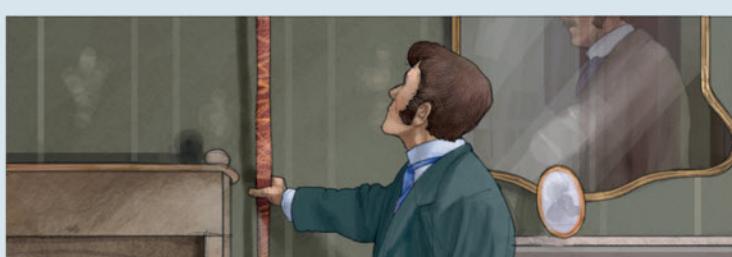
- a I put all my important papers in a *safe / shop*.



- c The only *furniture / family* in the room is a big table.



- e There's a *ventilator / village* in the wall over the door.



- g We use the *dog lead / bell-rope* when we need something from the servants.



- b Don't pull / *put* your brother's hair!



- d The road goes in a *stop / loop* around the town.



- f Don't forget the *dog lead / television* when you go out for a walk.



- h We can sleep at that *inn / restaurant*.

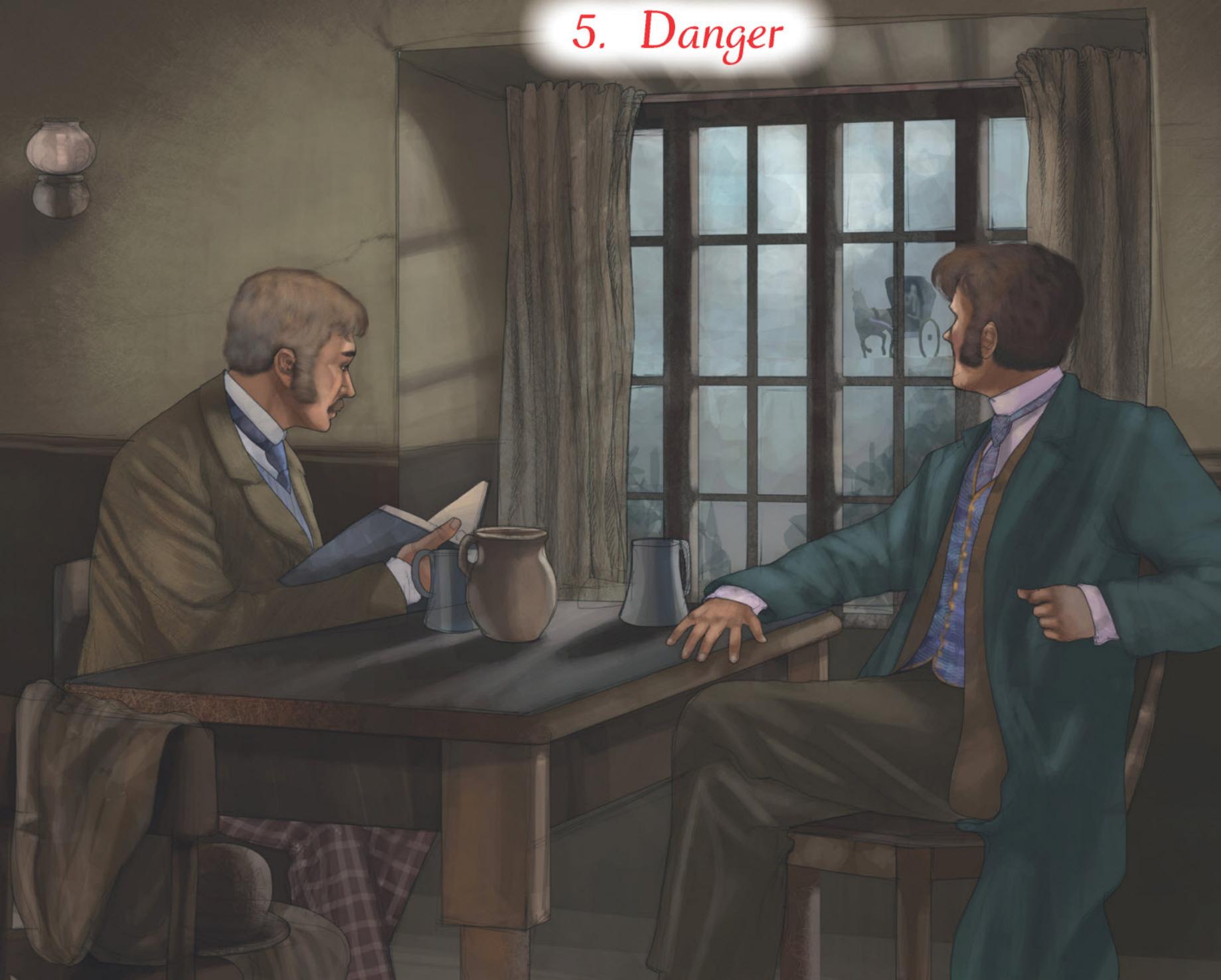
## GUESS WHAT

What happens in the next chapter? Tick two boxes.

- a  Holmes and Watson wait at the inn.  
b  Watson is afraid and he runs away.

- c  Julia puts something in Roylott's drink.  
d  Holmes and Watson go to Julia's bedroom.

## 5. Danger



Holmes and Watson go to the inn and wait. Soon they see Dr Roylott driving towards the house in his trap. The big man goes into the house and closes the door behind him.

Holmes speaks quietly to his friend.

'Do you want to come with me tonight, Watson? You can say no. There is **danger** in that house.'

Watson smiles. 'I'm not afraid, Holmes. I want to help.'

'Thank you, my friend.' Holmes waits for a minute, and then he says, 'You know, that ventilator is not a **surprise** to me.'

'Why?' Watson asks.

**danger**  
something that  
can kill you

**surprise**  
something  
happening that  
you did not think  
of

‘Do you remember Helen’s words about her sister? Julia can smell the incense from her room and she doesn’t like it. The **smoke** from the incense must go through a ventilator from one room to the next.’

‘That’s very good, Holmes.’

‘And there’s one more thing, Watson.’

‘What’s that, Holmes?’

‘There is something strange about Julia’s bed. Nobody can move it. It is always in that **position** – so the bell-rope and the ventilator are always in the same position over the bed, too.’

‘I’m beginning to understand now!’ Watson cries. ‘We are talking here about a terrible **crime**! ’

‘Yes, and we are going to see terrible things tonight, I think. Let’s sit and talk about happier times for a few hours.’

The two men wait. At eleven o’clock, they finally see a light in the window of Julia’s room.

‘That’s Helen’s lamp,’ Holmes says. ‘Let’s go.’

**smoke** this is white or grey and goes up into the air from a fire

**position** where something is

**crime** killing someone, taking money from someone, or doing something very bad





Holmes and Watson leave the inn and walk out into the night. They go quickly across the garden towards the house. Suddenly, they see something strange running through the trees.

'What's that? A child?' Watson asks, afraid.

Holmes laughs quietly. 'No, it's a baboon,' he answers.  
'What a strange family!'

The two men take off their shoes and go into Julia's bedroom. Holmes moves the lamp onto the table and looks around the room. He puts his mouth near to Watson's head and he says quietly: 'We must sit without light. Roylott can see it through the ventilator. Do not sleep, and have your **pistol** near.'

Holmes sits on the bed. Near him there is a cane and some **matches**. He puts out the lamp and finally the room is dark.

**pistol** a small gun; a person can kill someone with this

**match** you use this to light a fire



# ACTIVITIES

## READING CHECK

Are these sentences true or false? Tick the boxes.

True False

- a Watson wants to help Holmes.
- b There is danger at Stoke Moran.
- c Holmes is not surprised by some things in Julia's bedroom.
- d When Roylott goes to bed, Helen cries out to Holmes.
- e Holmes and Watson see a child running in the garden.
- f The two men take off their shoes before entering Julia's room.
- g They sit in Julia's room and read.

## WORD WORK

1 Complete the sentences with words from the picture.



### Down

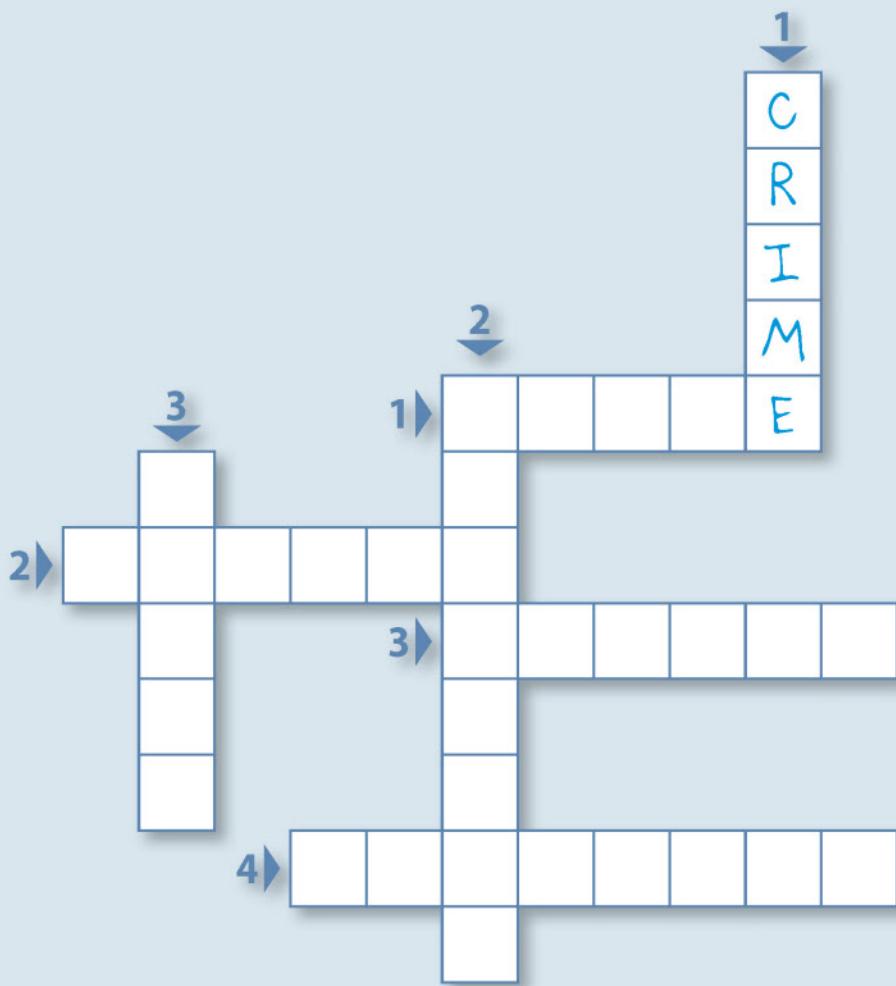
- 1 Murder is a terrible ..... *crime* .....
- 2 Is it your birthday? What a .....!
- 3 Give me a ..... . I can't see anything.

### Across

- 1 The ..... from that incense is going in my eyes.
- 2 There is ..... in this house. I can feel it.
- 3 You can kill someone with a knife or a .....
- 4 I would like to put the chairs in a different .....

# ACTIVITIES

2 Now use the words to complete the puzzle.



## GUESS WHAT

How does the story finish? Tick one box.

- a  Dr Watson marries Helen.
- b  Roylott goes to prison for a long time.
- c  Roylott's cheetah kills Holmes.
- d  An animal kills Roylott.



## 6. *The Speckled Band*

It is a long, cold night. Night-birds call out from time to time. Every fifteen minutes, the two men hear the village clock.

Suddenly, just after three o'clock, they see a light through the ventilator. It soon goes off, but then the men smell **oil** and hot metal. Someone is lighting a lamp. Nothing happens for half an hour and then there is a strange **hissing** noise. When he hears this, Holmes jumps off the bed, lights a match, and begins to hit the bell-rope with his cane.

'Do you see it, Watson?' he cries.



Watson hears a whistling sound but he sees nothing, only his friend's white face.

Holmes stops hitting the bell-rope and looks up at the ventilator. Just then they hear the most terrible noise, a cry from someone very angry and afraid. The cry goes up and then, suddenly, it stops.

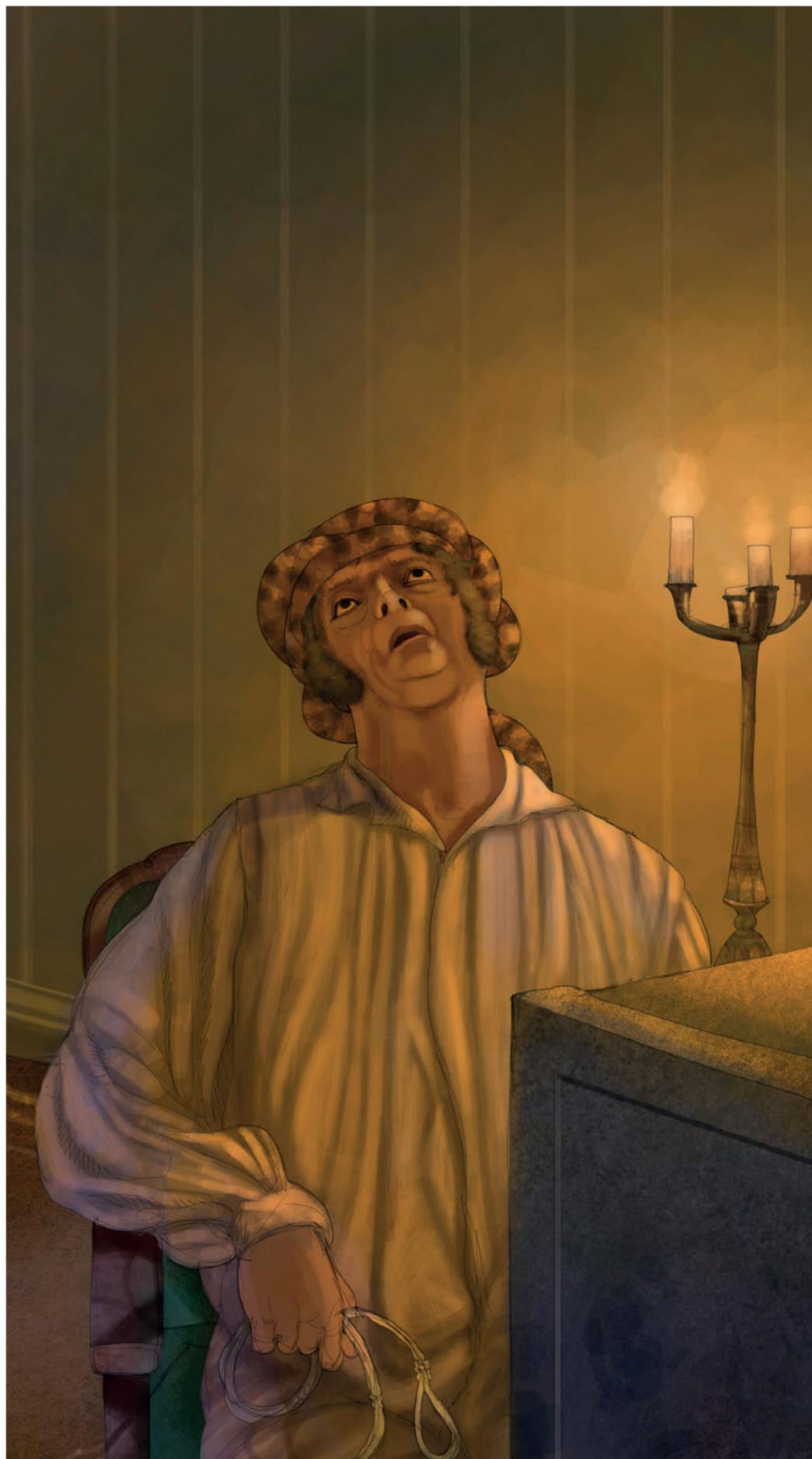
'What is it?' Watson asks.

'Take your pistol,' says Holmes. 'We are going into Dr Roylott's room.'

The men walk down the corridor and Holmes hits Roylott's door with his cane. There is no answer.

Holmes opens the door and goes into the room. Watson goes after him, his pistol in his hand.

A lamp on the table lights the open door of the metal safe. Dr Grimesby Roylott is sitting on a chair next to the table. He is wearing long night-clothes. The dog lead with the loop is in one hand. His eyes are open and they are looking up. Round his head there is a strange yellow band with brown speckles on it.



'It's the speckled band!' says Holmes.

Watson walks forward a little and at that moment the strange yellow band begins to move too. The big head and body of a terrible **snake** begins to move out of Roylott's hair.

'Be careful, Watson! That's the most **poisonous** snake in India!' Holmes cries. 'It can kill a man in ten seconds. We can do nothing for Roylott. He is dead. We must put the snake in the safe!'

Holmes takes the dog lead from the dead man's hand. He throws the loop around the snake's body.

Then he throws the hissing snake into the safe and closes the door.



'Now, Watson, we must take Miss Stoner away from here – and then we can tell the police everything.'

Helen soon hears the sad story and she goes to stay at a friend's house in Harrow. Weeks later, the police tell her, 'We're sorry about your stepfather, Miss Stoner but snakes are dangerous animals. You can't play with them.' Helen says nothing, but now she knows about her sister's death.

The day after Roylott's death, Holmes finishes the story for Dr Watson and he answers his friend's questions.

'Now we understand Julia's last words, Watson. The poor woman sees the snake for a second before she dies and talks of the 'speckled band'. All the time, the danger is not coming from outside the house. It is coming from inside, from Dr Grimesby Roylott. He is guilty, not the gypsies. Nobody can get in through the door and window so the ventilator and the bell-rope must be the answer to our terrible crime. The bell-rope goes to the bed. Roylott loves his strange animals so I begin to think, *'Perhaps the bell-rope is a **bridge** for a small animal. It goes from his room through the ventilator into Julia's room.'* The chair in Roylott's room has the marks of feet on it. Roylott stands on it with the snake in his hands and then he puts the animal through the ventilator.

**bridge** people can go across things on this, usually across rivers



The snake's poison kills quickly. The marks from its mouth are very small so the police do not find them. Of course, Grimesby must bring the snake back to his room later and so we have the whistle and the milk. Grimesby teaches his animals well! The metallic noise is the door of the safe closing on the snake. Perhaps the snake doesn't kill on the first night – but sooner or later it must kill, and poor Julia must die.

On the night of Grimesby's death, I hear the hiss of the



snake, I light a match and quickly hit the animal.'

'Then it goes through the ventilator,' Watson says, 'and kills Dr Roylott.'

'That's right,' Holmes says. 'Grimesby's animal finally kills its teacher. Am I also Grimesby's killer, Watson? Perhaps I am, but I don't feel very bad about it. I'm going to sleep well tonight, my friend.'

'Me too,' Watson smiles.



# ACTIVITIES

## READING CHECK

### Correct the sentences.

light

a At three o'clock, Holmes and Watson see a ~~man~~ light through the ventilator.

b Holmes hits the bell-rope with his foot.

c They hear a noise and go to Julia's room.

d Roylott is sitting on a bed.

e There is something green in his hair.

f Holmes puts the animal in the garden.

g The bread on the safe is not for the cheetah.

h The metallic noise is from the door of the bedroom.

i The snake helps Roylott in the end.

j Holmes is going to sleep badly tonight.

k Now Helen knows the truth about her brother's death.

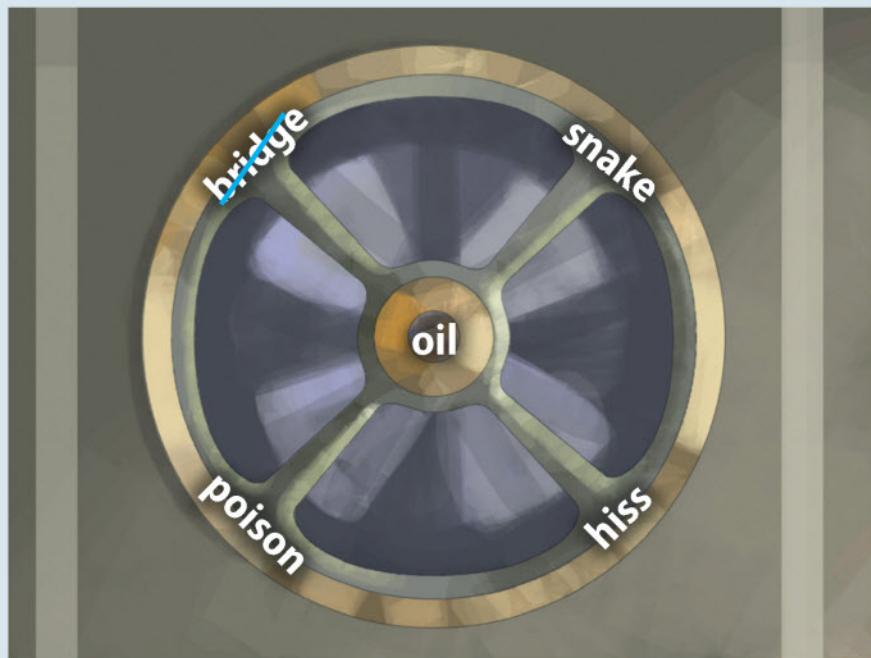


# ACTIVITIES

## WORD WORK

Complete the sentences with the words in the ventilator.

- a That ..... **bridge** ..... goes across the River Thames.
- b The Black Mamba is a small ..... but it can kill you.
- c Drink ..... and you are very ill or you die.
- d When I hear the ..... of a snake I feel very afraid.
- e This old ..... lamp smells terrible.



## GUESS WHAT

What happens to Helen after the story finishes? Tick the boxes and add your own ideas.

- a  She lives with her friend in Harrow.
- b  She sells Stoke Moran and is very rich.
- c  She writes a book about her life.
- d  She marries and has a lot of children.
- e .....
- f .....



## Project A *Dangerous animals*

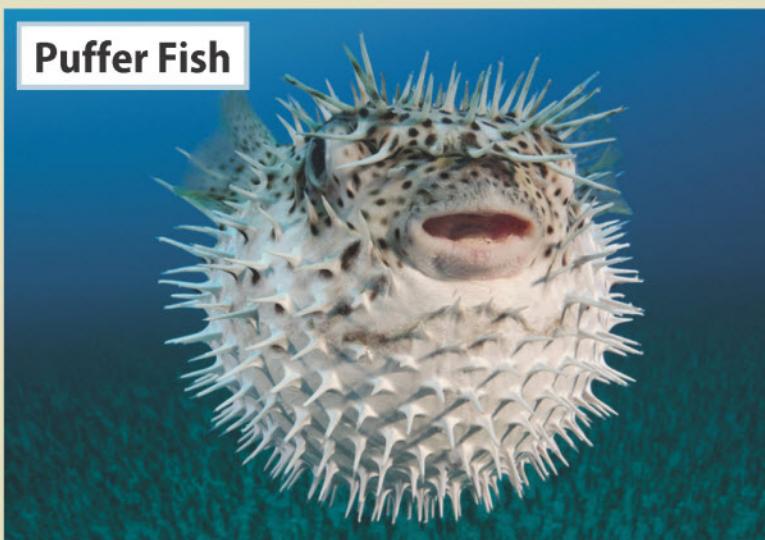
- 1 There are many dangerous animals in the world. Complete the text below with the names of the animals in the pictures. Use a dictionary to help you.



**Inland Taipan**



**Poison Dart Frog**



**Puffer Fish**



**Blue-Ringed Octopus**

Small animals can be very dangerous. The ..... is a beautiful blue colour. It lives in Central and South America. It is only 5 cm long but it is one of the most poisonous animals on Earth. It eats a lot of insects and the poison from these goes into its skin. The native people use the poison to kill animals for food.

Not all snakes are dangerous but some of them can hurt or kill humans. The world's most poisonous snake lives in Australia. Just one bite from the ..... can kill up to 100 people. Luckily, these snakes are very shy and do not like human contact.

The sea is home to dangerous animals too. The ..... lives in the Pacific Ocean. It is very small, but its poison can kill a human. In Japan, people like eating the flesh of the ..... , a strange animal with a very big mouth and eyes. Cooks must prepare the fish carefully, because it is very poisonous to humans.

# PROJECTS

## 2 Read the text again and match the animal and the fact.

You can eat this animal, but it is dangerous.

Inland Taipan

It is very small and it lives in the sea.

Poison Dart Frog

It does not like people very much.

Puffer Fish

The local people use its poison.

Blue-Ringed Octopus

## 3 Complete the notes about the Poison Dart Frog with the information from Activity 1.

name of animal	Poison Dart Frog
size	5 cm
colour	
lives in	
eats	
is dangerous because	
other interesting information	

## 4 Choose a different dangerous animal. Find out about it. Make notes about your animal in the table below.

name of animal	
size	
colour	
lives in	
eats	
is dangerous because	
other interesting information	

## 5 Make a fact sheet about your animal. Illustrate it with drawings or photos. Use your notes and the texts in Activities 1–4 to help you.

## Project B Write a police report

- 1 After a crime, the police usually write a report. Read the report below and complete the notes. Use a dictionary to help you.

### Report on the death of Rajesh Patel

On June 20th 1850, we go to 3 Queen's Drive, Calcutta. We find the dead body of Rajesh Patel on the floor of the living room. There is a knife next to the body.

Patel, 35, is servant to Dr Grimesby Roylott, the owner of the house.

Roylott tells us about a robbery at his house. His watch and his wife's jewellery are missing. Patel is the thief, Roylott thinks. He and Patel fight and Roylott uses his knife to defend himself.

We do not find the watch and jewellery on Patel's body.

We arrest Dr Roylott on suspicion of murder.



date of police visit	June 20th 1850
name of victim	
age of victim	
place of death	
cause of death	Knife wounds
person arrested	
reason for arrest	suspicion of murder

# PROJECTS

2 Work with a partner. Choose report A or B below and complete it using the notes.

<b>A</b>	<b>date of police visit</b>	March 2nd 1881
	<b>name of victim</b>	Julia Stoner
	<b>age of victim</b>	31
	<b>place of death</b>	Stoke Moran House
	<b>cause of death</b>	not clear
	<b>person arrested</b>	nobody

<b>B</b>	<b>date of police visit</b>	April 15th 1883
	<b>name of victim</b>	Dr Grimesby Roylott
	<b>age of victim</b>	65
	<b>place of death</b>	Stoke Moran House
	<b>cause of death</b>	a poisonous snake bite
	<b>person arrested</b>	nobody

**A**

## Report on the death of Julia Stoner

On ..... we go to ..... in Surrey. We find the dead body of ..... in the corridor near her bedroom. We do not find any weapons near the body.

The cause of Miss Stoner's death is ..... There are no marks of violence on her body. Her sister, Helen Stoner,

tells us about strange noises in the house before Julia's death. We speak to her stepfather, Dr Roylott, and also to the gypsies living near the house.

We arrest ..... in connection with Miss Stoner's death.



**B****Report on the death of Dr Grimesby Roylott**

On ..... we go to ..... in Surrey. We find the dead body of ..... on a chair in his bedroom. We do not find any weapons near the body. There is a dangerous snake in the safe, Mr Holmes tells us.

The cause of Dr Roylott's death is ..... Dr Roylott has dangerous animals in his garden and inside his house.

We arrest ..... in connection with Dr Roylott's death. His death is probably an accident.

We inform his stepdaughter, Miss Helen Stoner, of this.



**3 Ask your partner questions about his / her report. Write down the answers and complete the second report.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>a</b> When do the police see the body? | <b>d</b> How old is the victim?        |
| <b>b</b> Where do they see the body?      | <b>e</b> What is the cause of death?   |
| <b>c</b> What is the victim's name?       | <b>f</b> Do the police arrest anybody? |

**4 Investigate! Find out about a real crime on the Internet or in a newspaper. Make notes about it. Write a short report about the crime. Use the reports in Activities in 1, 2, and 3 to help you.**

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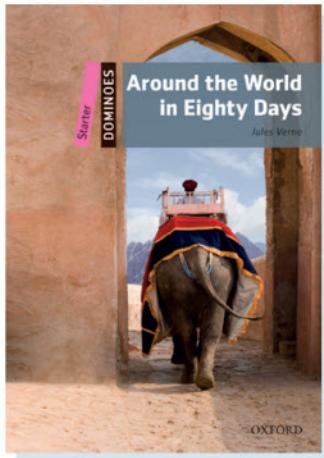
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Can Kokua find a way to help Keawe? Or will one of them go to hell in the end?

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Level 1	A1–A2	YLE Flyers/KET	3.0	–	225
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# Sherlock Holmes: The Speckled Band

'Help me,' says Helen Stoner. 'My sister died, and now I am going to die too.'

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson must answer the question of how Julia Stoner died, two years ago. If they cannot, then Helen Stoner will die too. But her house is very strange - and her stepfather, Dr Grimesby Roylott, is very angry and does not want Holmes there.

Who killed Julia, and how? And why did she say 'the speckled band!' before she died?

Text adaptation by Lesley Thompson  
Illustrated by Giorgio Bacchin

 This book is supported by a MultiROM, containing a complete dramatized audio recording of the story plus interactive activities.

Word count 3,371

LEVEL	HEADWORDS
Three	1000
Two	700
One	400
Starter & Quick Starter	250

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