

# “The Dying Detective”

STUDY GUIDE

# SCENE ONE QUESTIONS

# 1. How did Mrs. Hudson describe Sherlock Holmes's illness?

- **“He could hardly stand. Just muttered to me to help him to his bed here, and he's barely spoken since.”**
- **“Won't take food or drink. Just lies there, sleeping or staring in a wild sort of way.”**

## 2. Why didn't she call Dr. Watson when she discovered the illness?

- **Mrs. Hudson didn't call Dr. Watson when she discovered the illness because Holmes shouted that he wouldn't allow any doctor on the premises.**

3. In this scene, why wouldn't Holmes let Dr. Watson come too near him?

- **Holmes wouldn't let Dr. Watson come too near to him because he says he is contagious by touch.**

## 4. What diseases did Holmes imply he might have?

- **Holmes says he has contracted a coolie disease-from Sumatra. ( The term coolie refers to an unskilled worker from the East Indies or China. Sumatra is an island in Indonesia, which lies on the equator in the Indian Ocean)**
- **He implies that he has contracted the Tapanuli Fever. (Tapanuli is a tiny atoll east of Indonesia in the South Pacific Ocean)**
  - **An atoll is a coral island (or islands) that encircles a lagoon partially or completely.**

5. How long did Holmes tell Watson he must wait before going to get a doctor to examine Holmes?

- **Holmes tells Watson he must wait two hours until he will let a doctor examine him. The time is currently four o'clock; Watson must wait until six o'clock.**

## 6. Why do you think Watson accepts Holmes's explanation and request?

- **Watson probably accepts Holmes's explanation and request because.....**



# Scene Two Questions

# 1. What upsets Holmes as Scene 2 begins?

- **Holmes is upset because Watson is about to pick up the little box on the bedside table. Holmes replies, “ No! No, Watson, no!**

## 2. Where did Holmes instruct Watson to put his coins?

- **Holmes tells Watson to put his coins in his watch-pocket- and all the rest of his money of his money in your left trouser-pocket. “It will balance you so much better like that.”**

### 3. What were Holmes' instructions to Watson about the lamp and the curtains?

- **Holmes' instructions were to light the lamp by the window, but ONLY at half flame. Also, he told him NOT to draw (close) the curtains.**

#### 4. Why does Holmes send for Culverton Smith instead of a doctor?

- **Holmes sends for Culverton Smith instead of a doctor because, although Culverton Smith is only a planter, he's a methodical man who has studied the disease intensely.**

## 5. Why would Culverton Smith be reluctant to come to Sherlock Holmes?

- **Culverton Smith would be reluctant to come to Sherlock Holmes because Smith holds a grudge with Holmes.**

## 6. What were the instructions about Culverton Smith's arrival?

- **Holmes told Watson to “plead with him to come....I rely on you to soften him. Beg, Watson. Pray. But get him here by any means.”**

# Scene Three Questions



# 1. Where is Watson when Culverton Smith arrives?

- **Watson, following Holmes' orders, hides behind the head of Holmes' bed.**

## 2. Who was Victor Savage? How did he die?

- **Victor Savage was Culverton Smith's cousin. He died from the Tapanuli fever.**

### 3. What symptoms of illness does Sherlock Holmes display at this time?

- **The symptoms Holmes displays at this time are:**
  - **Cramps**
  - **Thirst**
  - **Not seeing clearly**
  - **Deliriousness**

## 4. Why does Culverton Smith poison Victor Savage?

- **Culverton Smith poisoned Victor Savage because he wanted to have Victor's inheritance.**

## 5. How does Smith think he has poisoned Holmes?

- **Smith thinks that Holmes opened a box which had a sharp spring inside it. The sharp spring was suppose to prick Holmes and infect him with the disease.**

## 6. What is the real reason for Watson to hide?

- **Watson was asked to hide to corroborate Holmes' story that Culverton Smith killed Victor Savage.**

# 7. How did Holmes make himself look ill?

- **Holmes did the following to make himself look ill:**
  - **Fasted for three days**
  - **Used Vaseline to produce the glistening forehead**
  - **Belladonna, a drug made from a poisonous plant, for the watering eyes**
  - **Rouge for the cheekbones**
  - **Crust of beeswax round his lips**

## 8. What is the real reason Watson could not come near Holmes in Scene 1?

- **Holmes knew that if Watson came close to him he would realize that Holmes wasn't really ill. Holmes knows Watson is a very intelligent man.**