

Sherlock Holmes: Prose to Drama

Name: _____

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created the character of Sherlock Holmes in the late 19th century. One of the most famous short stories about this exceptional detective is "The Red-Headed League" which was published in 1891.

Below are the opening paragraphs of the short story. Rewrite the text as a play, using the three characters in the passage: Sherlock Holmes, his friend Dr. Watson, and the red-headed Mr. Wilson. You may use stage directions as needed, but the rest of script should be as dialogue only.

The Red-Headed League

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

I had called upon my friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, one day in the autumn of last year and found him in deep conversation with a very stout, florid-faced, elderly gentleman with fiery red hair. With an apology for my intrusion, I was about to withdraw when Holmes pulled me abruptly into the room and closed the door behind me.

"You could not possibly have come at a better time, my dear Watson," he said cordially.

"I was afraid that you were engaged."

"So I am. Very much so."

"Then I can wait in the next room."

"Not at all. This gentleman, Mr. Wilson, has been my partner and helper in many of my most successful cases, and I have no doubt that he will be of the utmost use to me in yours also."

The stout gentleman half rose from his chair and gave a bob of greeting, with a quick little questioning glance from his small fat-encircled eyes.

"Try the settee," said Holmes, relapsing into his armchair and putting his fingertips together, as was his custom when in judicial moods. "I know, my dear Watson, that you share my love of all that is bizarre and outside the conventions and humdrum routine of everyday life. You have shown your relish for it by the enthusiasm which has prompted you to chronicle, and, if you will excuse my saying so, somewhat to embellish so many of my own little adventures."

"Your cases have indeed been of the greatest interest to me," I observed.

"You will remember that I remarked the other day, just before we went into the very simple problem presented by Miss Mary Sutherland, that for strange effects and extraordinary combinations we must go to life itself, which is always far more daring than any effort of the imagination."

"A proposition which I took the liberty of doubting."

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Student's answers will vary; sample of correct answer.

Act I Scene 1

Sherlock homes sitting room.

[Holmes and Wilson seated. Enter Watson]

Watson: [turning to leave] Please forgive the intrusion.

Holmes: [cordially] You could not possibly have come at a better time, my dear Watson.

[rises and pulls Watson into the room.]

Watson: I was afraid that you were engaged.

Holmes: So I am. Very much so.

Watson: Then I can wait in the next room.

Holmes: Not at all. [to Wilson] This gentleman, Mr. Wilson, has been my partner and helper in many of my most successful cases, and I have no doubt that he will be of the utmost use to me in yours also.

[Wilson rises, gives small bow to Watson, and looks questioningly at Holmes.]

Holmes: Try the settee.

[Sitting]

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