Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Assignment: The Dying Detective**

1. **Who was Mrs Hudson? How did she describe Sherlock’s Holmes illness?**

Mrs Hudson was Holmes’ landlady. She was horrified when she saw Holmes. He had been working on a case in an alley, near the river and he had brought this illness back with him from the dockworkers.

1. **Did Dr Watson see Sherlock Holmes in a terrible condition?**

Yes, Sherlock Holmes was indeed in a terrible condition. His gaunt and wasted face sent a chill to Dr Watson’s heart. His thin hands twitched incessantly, his voice was croaking and spasmodic. There was a hectic flush upon either cheek and dark crusts clung to his lips. He laid listlessly on his bed when Dr Watson came in.

1. **Why wouldn’t Holmes let Dr Watson come too near him?**

Holmes wouldn’t allow Dr Watson to come to close to him as he pretended to be suffering from a disease from Sumatra which was dangerous and deadly. The disease was called Tapanuli Fever or Black Formosa Corruption. However, the real reason was that Dr Watson would come to know the truth of Holmes’ fake illness.

1. **Why is Holmes compared to a child?**

Holmes is compared to a child as he blabbered and spoke nonsense. He was stubborn and was not letting Dr Watson examine him.

1. **Who is Dr. Ainstree? How does Holmes react to his name?**

Who is Dr. Ainstree was the greatest living authority on tropical disease that Holmes’ was supposedly suffering. Holmes, on hearing his name, instantly leaped like a tiger and he locked the door.

1. **What request does Holmes make to Watson regarding the doctor?**

Holmes first requests Watson to not take the key from him by force. He also tells him that they would resume their conversation from six. Later he tells Watson to call Culverton Smith instead of the doctor. Culverton Smith was a well-known resident of Sumatra who was a planter who was visiting London.

1. **Describe the box that Dr. Watson picks up and mention its importance.**

It was a small black and white ivory box with a sliding lid. It was important as it was an important evidence to solve Victor’s murder case. Hence, Holmes tells Watson to pick it up with sugar tongs.

1. **Why does Holmes tell Dr. Watson to pick up the box with the tongs?**

Holmes tells Dr. Watson to pick up the box with the tongs as it contained a sharp spring infected with some virus that can was fatal.

1. **Why does Holmes send for Culverton Smith instead of a doctor?**

Holmes sends for Culverton Smith instead of a doctor as he was pretending that he was ill and didn’t want this secret to be out. Moreover, he also wanted to catch Culverton Smith red-handedly as he was guilty of murdering his nephew, Victor.

1. **Why did Culverton Smith not want to come to Holmes’ house?**

Culverton Smith didn’t want to come to Holmes’ house as there was no good feeling between them and it was Holmes who was suspicious of some foul play and he allowed Smith to see it. He also had a grudge against Holmes.

1. **What instructions was Dr Watson to follow after giving the message to Culverton Smith? Why?**

Dr Watson was told that he should only persuade Smith to come and you will return before him by making any excuse so as to not come with Smith. Sherlock Holmes wanted to catch Smith red-handed and also wanted Watson to be a key witness when Smith would confess his crime.

1. **Give a brief note on the Inspector.**

Inspector Morton of Scotland Yard, knew Holmes’ plan to catch Smith as he smiled when Watson said that Holmes was very ill.

1. **Describe the encounter between Watson and Smith at the latter’s house.**

When Watson enters in spite of Smith’s butler stopping him, Smith screams in high pitched voice on Watson’s sudden infiltration. The mention of Sherlock Holmes’ name had an extraordinary effect upon the little man. The look of anger passed in an instant from his face. His face became tense and alert. When Watson mentions that Holmes is terribly ill, Smith gives a malicious smile surreptitiously which Watson notices in the mirror. The moment Smith turned to Watson, his malicious smile changed to a serious demeanour.

1. **Why was Dr. Watson told to hide?**

Dr Watson was told to hide so that he overhears the conversation between Holmes and Smith and can prove to be a witness if in case Smith turns the table round.

1. **Give details about Victor’s murder.**

Victor was killed by his own uncle, Culverton Smith for property. The ivory box had a sharp spring inside which was the cause of Victor’s death. It drew his blood and infected him with the deadly virus of Asiatic disease. He died on the fourth day after contracting the disease.

1. **Who waited outside Holmes’ house and what signal was he waiting for? What preparations had Holmes done regarding the signal?**

Inspector Morton of Scotland Yard was waiting outside Holmes’ house. The signal that he was waiting was of lighting of the candle. Holmes had already instructed Watson to turn up the gas not more than half on so that the light of the candle will be clearly visible to Morton to get the signal.

1. **How had Holmes tried to fit in the character of a sick man?**

Holmes was on absolute fast for three days; without food or water. He used a little bit of Vaseline upon his forehead, rouge over the cheek-bones and crusts of beeswax round one’s lips which produced a satisfying effect.

1. **Was Culverton an unpleasant man without the revelation that he is a murderer?**

Yes, Culverton Smith was an extremely unpleasant man as he was very inhospitable when Dr Watson comes to visit him. Without rhyme or reason, he instructs his butler not to send him in without even knowing the cause of his visit or his name.

1. **Which two charges were imposed upon Mr. Smith?**

The two charges imposed on Culverton Smith were: an attempted murder of Holmes and murder of Victor.

1. **Do you agree that Holmes had deductive reasoning power? Justify with an example from the story.**

Yes, Sherlock Holmes did have deductive reasoning power. He is extremely careful with strange gifts that come by anonymous posts.