



Dr. Watson and Stamford walking through London

“It’s hard to explain,” Stamford replied with a laugh. “Holmes is just different. He’s really into science, maybe too much. I’ve heard he sometimes does little experiments on his friends, or even on himself, to be fair. Not to be mean, but just out of curiosity. He’s obsessed with learning.”

“Sounds interesting,” I said. “I’m looking forward to meeting him.”

“He’s certainly unique,” Stamford said as we arrived at the hospital.

We went into the chemical laboratory, where we found Sherlock Holmes working. He was excited about some discovery he’d made. “Dr. Watson, Mr. Sherlock Holmes,” Stamford introduced us.

“How are you?” Holmes greeted me warmly, shaking my hand firmly. “You’ve been in Afghanistan, I see.”

“How did you know that?” I asked, surprised.

“Never mind,” Holmes chuckled. “But now, let’s talk about this discovery of mine. It’s a perfect way to test for blood stains. Come over here!” He grabbed me by the coat sleeve and pulled me over to the table where he was working. “First, we’ll need some fresh blood,” he said. He poked his finger with a needle, drawing a single drop of blood. “Now, I’ll add my blood to a glass of water. It’s a small amount of blood, but I have no doubt the results will be exactly what I expect.” As he spoke, he threw a few white crystals into the glass. He then added some drops of a



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clear fluid. Instantly, the liquid in the glass turned a muddy red. At the same time, a brownish dust drifted down to the bottom of the glass. Holmes clapped his hands, looking as delighted as a child with a new toy. “What do you think of that?”

“It’s a very clever test,” I commented.

“It’s more than clever. It’s amazing and unique!”

Holmes exclaimed. “This test will change everything in criminal investigations. The old test was very clumsy and unreliable. It doesn’t work if the stains are a few hours old. This test works well whether the blood is old or new. This will change everything in criminal investigations. Imagine all the cases we can solve now!”

“Indeed!” I murmured.

“The problem is often that a man is suspected of a crime months after it has been committed. His clothes are examined, and brownish stains are discovered on them. Are they blood stains, or mud stains, or rust stains, or fruit stains—what are they? That is a question which has puzzled many an expert. And why? Because there was no reliable test. Now we have the Sherlock Holmes’s test, and there will no longer be any difficulty.” His eyes glittered as he spoke. He bowed as if to some imaginary applauding crowd. He then rattled off all the criminals who would have been caught if his test had existed before.

“You seem to know a lot about crime,” Stamford laughed. “You could start a newspaper about it.”



Sherlock Holmes in the laboratory



“That would be fascinating,” Holmes said, smiling. He pressed a small piece of medical tape to the prick on his finger. “I have to be careful, though. I experiment a lot with poisons.” He held out his hand as he spoke, and I noticed that it was spotted with similar pieces of tape.

As we chatted, Stamford explained that I was looking for a place to live. He suggested Holmes might be interested in sharing rooms with me.

“I have my eye on a place on Baker Street,” Holmes said. “Do you mind the smell of tobacco?”

“I smoke myself,” I replied.

“Good. I also do experiments with chemicals. Would that bother you?”

“Not at all.”

“Great. I should warn you that I sometimes get in a bad mood and don’t talk for several days. Just leave me alone, and I’ll be fine. What about you? Are there any habits I should know about?”

“I don’t like arguments,” I said. “I’m also lazy. Those are my main flaws.”

“Do you mind if I play the violin?” Holmes asked.

“It depends on how well you play,” I answered. “A good violinist is wonderful, but a bad one—”

“Oh, don’t worry,” Holmes laughed. “I think we’ll get along just fine. Let’s consider it settled. We’ll go see the rooms tomorrow at noon.”

“Sounds good,” I agreed, shaking his hand.





After leaving Holmes, Stamford and I walked back to my hotel.

“By the way,” I suddenly asked Stamford, “how did Holmes know I’d been in Afghanistan?”

Stamford just smiled mysteriously. “That’s Holmes for you,” he said. “He’s always figuring things out.”

“Oh, it’s a mystery, then?” I said excitedly. “I’m looking forward to getting to know him better.”

“You’ll have your hands full with him,” Stamford laughed. “He’s hard to figure out. Goodbye!”

“Goodbye,” I replied.





The Science of Deduction

We met the next day to check out the rooms at 221B Baker Street. There were two comfy bedrooms and a big, sunny living room with two big windows. The rent was reasonable when split between us, and we immediately agreed to move in that evening. I brought my stuff from the hotel, and the next morning, Holmes arrived with his. We spent a day or two unpacking and setting up our things. After that, we started getting used to our new place.

Living with Holmes wasn't hard. He was quiet and had a routine. He usually went to bed early, before ten, and was always up and out before I woke up. Some days, he'd be in his lab doing experiments. Other times, he'd be in the dissecting rooms. Sometimes, he'd take long walks around the city, even to the rough parts. When he got into his work, he was full of energy. But sometimes, he'd have days where

he'd lie on the living room couch, hardly saying a word or moving all day. His eyes would look kind of empty, like he was somewhere else. I wondered if he used some kind of drug, but he lived clean, so I pushed that thought aside.

As weeks went by, I got more curious about him. He was tall, over six feet, and thin, making him seem taller. His eyes were sharp, except when he was in one of those lazy moods. His nose was sharp, too, giving him a serious look. His hands were always dirty from his experiments, but he handled everything carefully. I'd watch him, fascinated, as he worked with his delicate lab equipment.

My life was pretty dull, with not much going on. I couldn't go out much because of my health, and I had no friends who would visit. So, I was interested in Holmes and spent much time figuring him out. I know it wasn't any of my business, but I couldn't help it.

He wasn't studying medicine. Stamford had confirmed that. He didn't seem to be looking to earn any type of science degree. But he was extremely into studying certain subjects. He knew a lot about unusual stuff, like poisons and chemicals. He could tell different soils apart just by looking at them. He'd come back from walks with stains on his pants. He'd tell me where in London he'd gotten them just by the color and texture. He knew so much about creepy stuff, too. He could tell you every gory detail of every crime ever committed.

But he knew little about everyday things. He wasn't fa-



miliar with famous writers or philosophers. He didn't even know basic facts about the universe. I was shocked when I learned he didn't know that the Earth revolves around the sun. He just shrugged it off, saying it didn't matter to him.

"You seem surprised," he said, smirking at my shock. "Now that I know it, I'll probably forget it anyway."

"Forget it?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "I think of my brain like a little attic. You've got to fill it with useful stuff, not junk. I only keep what helps me with my work."

"But what about the solar system?" I protested.

"What does it matter to me?" he replied impatiently.

"If we went around the moon, it wouldn't change a thing for me or my work."

I wanted to ask him about his work, but he didn't seem keen on discussing it. So, I tried to figure it out myself. He said he only knew what was useful to him, so I listed everything he knew about:

SHERLOCK HOLMES—His limits

1. *Knowledge of literature—None.*
2. *Philosophy—None.*
3. *Astronomy—None.*
4. *Politics—Very little.*
5. *Botany—Some. Knows a lot about opium and poisons. Knows nothing of practical*



Holmes thinks of his brain as a little attic



gardening.

6. *Geology—Practical, but limited. He can tell at a glance the difference between various types of soil.*
7. *Chemistry—Expert.*
8. *Anatomy—Excellent, but incomplete.*
9. *Sensational Literature—Very deep. Familiar with every horrible crime committed in the last century.*
10. *Plays the violin well.*
11. *Is an expert boxer and swordsman.*
12. *Has a good practical knowledge of British law.*

It was all too much to understand. So, I tossed the list away, feeling frustrated.

Holmes played the violin well, but he played it weirdly, not the usual tunes. He'd just sit there, eyes closed, scraping at the strings. Sometimes it sounded sad and other times happy. His music matched his thoughts, but I couldn't tell if it helped him think or was just a habit.

At first, we didn't have many visitors. I thought Holmes was lonely like me, but I was wrong. It turns out that he knew many people from different walks of life. There was this one gentleman, Mr. Lestrade, who came by often. And once, a fancy-dressed girl visited. Another time, an old and dirty-looking man came, followed by a sloppy old woman.



It was always a mix of people from all over.

When these folks showed up, Holmes would ask me to leave the room because they were his clients. He'd always apologize, saying he needed the room for business. I wanted to ask him more about it, but he didn't seem open to talking about it. However, he eventually brought it up himself.

On March 4, I woke up earlier than usual and found Holmes still eating breakfast. The landlady had forgotten to set the table for me, so I rang the bell, annoyed. Then, I grabbed a magazine and started reading while Holmes ate quietly.

One article caught my eye. It was called "The Book of Life" and discussed how observing little things can tell a lot about a person. It sounded smart but unlikely to succeed, so I tossed it down, annoyed.

"What's wrong?" Holmes asked.

"This article," I said, pointing to it. "It's cleverly written, but it's just too much. I'd like to see the writer try to guess people's jobs on the subway. He'd fail terribly."

"You'd be surprised," Holmes said calmly. "I wrote that article."

"You?" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he said. "I'm good at observing and figuring out things. Those theories in the article aren't just imagination. They're practical. They help me with my job."

"What job?" I asked.



“I’m a consulting detective,” he said casually. “People come to me with problems, and I help them solve them using my knowledge of crime history. Lestrade, the gentleman who visits, is a police detective. He came to me for help on a case.”

“And these other visitors?” I asked.

“They’re from private detective agencies,” he explained. “They’re all in some kind of trouble and need my help. I listen to their stories, give them advice, and they pay me for it.”

Still in disbelief, I said, “You mean to say you can solve cases without even leaving your room?”

“Most of the time, yes,” he said. “I’m very good at it. Sometimes, I have to go out and see things for myself, but mostly, I can figure it out from here. Observing is like second nature to me. Remember when I knew you had been in Afghanistan?”

“Someone must have told you.”

“Not at all. I’ve practiced this form of deduction for a long time. When I saw you, I said to myself, ‘This man seems like a medical professional, but also a military man. Clearly an army doctor, then. His face is dark, and that is not the natural tint of his skin. I can tell by the tan lines on his wrists. So he has just come from a tropical place. He has experienced hardship and sickness, which his tired face clearly shows. His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and unnatural way. In what tropical place could



Observing is like second nature for Holmes



an English army doctor have recently suffered and gotten his arm wounded? Clearly in Afghanistan.' This all raced through my mind in one second. I then said out loud that you must have just come from Afghanistan, and you were astonished."

"Simple when you explain it like that," I said, smiling. "You remind me of Dupin from Edgar Allen Poe's stories. I never thought such people existed outside of books."

Holmes chuckled. "Dupin was nothing special," he said. "He had some smarts, but he was no genius like people make him out to be."

"Have you read about Lecoq?" I asked. "Is he what you'd call a detective?"

Holmes rolled his eyes. "Lecoq was terrible," he said, annoyed. "He took forever to solve simple cases. I could do it in a day. Reading his book made me sick."

I felt a bit angry hearing Holmes dismiss characters I admired. I walked over to the window, looking at the busy street, thinking, "This guy might be clever, but he's way too full of himself."

"There's no real crime these days," Holmes complained. "What's the point of having brains in our line of work? I could make a name for myself if there were real crimes to solve. I've put so much study and talent into this, but there's nothing to show."

I was getting tired of his arrogance. I decided to change the subject.



"I wonder what that man outside is looking for," I said. I pointed to a man on the street who was holding a big blue envelope and checking house numbers.

"You mean the retired Marine sergeant?" Holmes said.

"This Holmes thinks he's so smart," I thought to myself. "He thinks I can't prove him wrong."

But before I could think more, the man spotted our house number. He crossed the street, and approached our door. He knocked loudly, a deep voice calling from below. We heard heavy steps coming up the stairs.

"For Mr. Sherlock Holmes," he said, handing Holmes the letter.

This was my chance to knock Holmes down a peg. He didn't expect this when he made his guess.

"May I ask what you do for a living?" I asked the delivery man, pretending to be polite.

"I'm a soldier, sir," the man replied rudely. "My uniform's in the shop."

"And you were a sergeant?" I asked, shooting a glance at Holmes.

"Royal Marine Light Infantry, sir," the man confirmed. "No further questions? Alright, sir." He saluted and left.

