

'I will tell you, then, what happened in your house that night. When your niece thought you had gone to your room, she went downstairs. She talked to her lover through the window which looks into the little road by the side of the house. He had stood there for a very long time, so his footprints had pressed right through the snow.

'She told him about the crown, and he wanted it very much. I have no doubt that she loved you, but he had a strong power over her. She saw you coming downstairs again, so she closed the window quickly and told you about the servant and her wooden-legged lover. That was all perfectly true.

'Your boy, Arthur, went to bed after his interview with you, but he slept badly because he was worried about money. In the middle of the night he heard a soft step pass his door. He got up, looked out, and was surprised to see his cousin walking very quietly along the passage.

'He quickly put on some clothes and waited there in the dark to watch. Very soon she came out of the room and, in the light of the passage lamp, your son saw that she was carrying the crown in her hands. She walked down the stairs and he waited behind the curtain near your door. From there he could see everything that happened in the hall below.

'He saw her quietly open the window, give the crown to someone standing outside, and then close it and hurry back to her room.

'He realized immediately how bad this would be for you. He rushed down the stairs, without his shoes, opened the window, jumped out into the snow, and ran down the road. Sir George Burnwell tried to get away, but Arthur caught him. There was a fight between them. Your son pulled at one side of the crown and Sir George at the other.

'In the fight, your son hit Sir George and cut him over the eye. Then something suddenly broke, and Arthur found the

crown in his hands. He rushed back, closed the window and went up to your dressing-room. When you came in, he had just noticed that the crown had been bent in the fight. He was trying to straighten it.'

'Is it possible?' whispered the banker.

'You then insulted him when he felt he deserved your warmest thanks. He could not tell you the truth without getting Mary into trouble. She had done nothing to deserve it, but he kept her secret.'

'She was shocked when she saw the crown,' cried Mr Holder. 'Oh, my God! I have been a blind fool! And he asked me to let him out for five minutes! The dear boy wanted to look for the missing piece at the scene of the fight.'

'When I arrived at the house,' continued Holmes, 'I went very carefully round it and looked at the prints in the snow. I knew that no snow had fallen since the evening before.

'I went along the narrow path, but too many people had walked on it. Just beyond it, however, at the far side of the kitchen door, a woman had stood and talked with a man. The round print on one side showed that he had a wooden leg.

'She had to leave him quickly, because she had run back to the door, leaving deep toe prints and light heel prints. Wooden-leg had waited a little, and then had gone away. I thought at the time that this might be the servant girl and her lover. I learned from you that it was.

'I then looked at the little road at the side of the house, and found a long and interesting story written in the snow. There was a double line of prints of a man wearing boots, and a second double line made by a man with no shoes on his feet. I was sure, from our conversation in the morning, that this second man was your son.

'The first had walked both ways, but the other man had run quickly. In some places his prints went over the prints of the

boots, so I could see that he had come after the other one. The prints led to the hall window.

'Then I walked to the other end, down in the road. I saw where Boots had turned round. It seemed that there had been a fight. Finally, I found some blood, and I knew that I was right.

'Boots had then run down the road, and more blood showed that he had been hurt. At the other end of the road, the snow had been cleared, so I could not follow him.

'When I entered the house, I examined the hall window. I could see at once that someone had gone out through it. I could also see the print of a wet foot coming in.

'I was then beginning to understand what had happened. A man had waited outside the window and someone had brought him the crown. Your son had seen this and had followed the thief. They had fought, and pulled at the crown. The strength of both of them had bent it.

'Your son had returned to the house with the crown, but had left a piece with the other man. All this was clear. The questions now were: Who was the other man? And who had brought him the crown?

'When you take away the impossible, you are left with the truth, although the truth often seems very unlikely. I knew that you had not brought the crown down, so it was your niece or Lucy Parr. But why would your son take the blame for Lucy's actions?

'There was no possible reason. But his love for his cousin was an excellent reason for keeping her secret. I remembered that you had seen her at that window. I also remembered that she was shocked when she saw the crown in your son's hands. Then I was sure I was right.

'And who could the other person be? A lover, of course. Who else could make her forget her love for you? I knew that you did not go out much, but one of your visitors was Sir George

Burnwell. I had heard of his behaviour with women. It seemed quite likely that he had the diamonds.

'Well, I went to his house yesterday, dressed as a poor man. I spoke to one of his servants and I learned that Sir George had been out all the night before. Finally, I bought a pair of his old shoes. I took them to Streatham, and they were exactly the same size as the footprints.'

'I saw someone in the little road by the house yesterday evening,' said Mr Holder.

'Yes, that was me. I knew who the criminal was, and I went to see him. At first, of course, he denied everything. But when I told him all the details, he picked up a heavy stick and came towards me.

'I pointed a revolver at his head before he could hit me. Then he decided to be sensible. I told him that I would give him a thousand pounds for each of the diamonds. I also promised him that he would hear nothing more about the matter.

'"Oh no!" he said. "I have sold all three for six hundred pounds!" He gave me the address of the man he had sold them to. After some discussion, I managed to get the stones for a thousand pounds each.

'Then I visited your son Arthur and told him the good news. I went to bed at two o'clock in the morning, after a really hard day's work.'

'A day which has saved England from great public shame!' said the banker. He got up from his chair. 'Sir, I cannot find the words to thank you. Your skill is even greater than people say. And now I must go and apologize to my dear boy. Your news about poor Mary hurts me greatly. Not even your skill can tell me where she is now.'

'I think we can be sure,' replied Holmes, 'that she is in the same place as Sir George Burnwell. We can also be sure that she will soon be punished enough.'

## ACTIVITIES

### 'The Speckled Band', pages 1–11

#### Before you read

- 1 Discuss these questions with another student.
  - a What famous murder stories in real life or fiction do you know?
  - b What famous detectives do you know? Are they real-life or fictional?
  - c Which three of these qualities are most important for a successful detective? Why?  
intelligence patience honesty absence of fear politeness
- 2 Look at the Word List at the back of the book. Which words are
  - a for people?
  - b for things that you can wear?
  - c for things that are dangerous?
  - d connected with keeping cool?
- 3 In this story a woman dies saying the words, 'It was the band! The speckled band!' Sherlock Holmes tries to guess what killed her. What do you think? Find the word *speckled* in the Word List at the back of the book. Then look at these four meanings of the word *band*. Which ones can be speckled?
  - a a group of people with the same interests
  - b a group of musicians
  - c a thick coloured line
  - d something long and narrow that forms a circle

#### While you read

- 4 Who do these words describe – Helen Stoner (HS), Dr Roylott (DR) or both (B)?
 

|                                       |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| a lives in a big house in Stoke Moran | ..... |
| b lived in India                      | ..... |
| c has a violent temper                | ..... |
| d has few friends                     | ..... |
| e sleeps on the ground floor          | ..... |
| f wants to marry                      | ..... |

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| g moves to another bedroom               | ..... |
| h speaks angrily to Sherlock Holmes      | ..... |
| i arranges to meet Sherlock Holmes later | ..... |
| j receives about £750 a year             | ..... |

#### After you read

- 5 Complete the sentences with the correct endings in 1–9 below.
 

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| a Roylott beat a servant to death so he ...                    | ..... |
| b Roylott was sent to prison so he ...                         | ..... |
| c Mrs Roylott died so Roylott ...                              | ..... |
| d Helen Stoner paid a lot of money so Roylott ...              | ..... |
| e Servants did not stay for long so Helen and Julia ...        | ..... |
| f Julia Stoner could smell strong Indian cigarettes so she ... | ..... |
| g Roylott keeps wild animals from India so Helen ...           | ..... |
| h Repairs are started on the house so Helen ...                | ..... |
| i Helen is frightened by a low whistle so she ...              | ..... |

  - 1) locks her bedroom door at night.
  - 2) was not punished for throwing a man off a bridge.
  - 3) moves to another bedroom.
  - 4) did all the housework.
  - 5) was sent to prison.
  - 6) asks Sherlock Holmes for help.
  - 7) was able to stop working.
  - 8) went into her sister's room.
  - 9) became a sad, angry man.
- 6 Discuss these questions with another student.
  - a Why wasn't anyone punished for Julia's death?
  - b Does Holmes like Dr Roylott? Why (not)?
  - c Does Dr Roylott want Helen to get married? Why (not)?

### 'The Speckled Band', pages 12–21

#### Before you read

- 7 Discuss these questions.
  - a How will these be important in the story?  
the travelling people animals from India a long, low whistle
  - b What do you think the 'speckled band' might be?

*While you read*

- 8 Which bedroom are these sentences about – Dr Roylott's (DR), Helen Stoner's (HS) or the extra bedroom (EB)?
- a It is nearest the main building. ....
  - b Helen's sister used to sleep there. ....
  - c There is building work outside it. ....
  - d Holmes tries to open its window with a knife. ....
  - e There is a thick bell rope. ....
  - f There is a ventilator between these two rooms. ....
  - g There is a large iron box and a bowl of milk on a table. ....
  - h Holmes and Watson stay the night there. ....
  - i Helen stays the night there. ....
  - j A strong smell of burning oil comes from it. ....

*After you read*

- 9 How are these things useful for Dr Roylott's plans?
- a the building work
  - b the iron box
  - c his medical knowledge
  - d the bell rope
  - e the ventilator
  - f the whistle
- 10 How do these help Holmes to solve the case?
- a the locked door and windows
  - b a sound like steam escaping
  - c the ventilator
  - d the bell rope
  - e the bed in Helen's room
  - f the chair in Dr Roylott's room
  - g the sound of falling metal
- 11 Discuss these questions with another students.
- a How does Helen feel about her stepfather's death? Why?
  - b Does Holmes tell the police the truth about Dr Roylott? Why (not)?
  - c Is Holmes right not to feel guilty about Dr Roylott's death? Why (not)?

**'The Five Orange Pips'**

*Before you read*

- 12 Look on the Internet or in books and find some information about the history of the United States. This information is important to the story.
- a What happened between 1861 and 1865?
  - b The name 'Jackson' appears in the story. He was an important man at the time. Who was he?

*While you read*

- 13 Are these sentences true (✓) or false (X)?
- a Sherlock Holmes has never failed to solve a case. ....
  - b John Openshaw's uncle was born in the United States. ....
  - c During the war, Uncle Elias fought for the South against the North. ....
  - d Uncle Elias died three months after he received the orange pips. ....
  - e John's father is sent orange pips from Dundee. ....
  - f John's father died three days after he received the orange pips. ....
  - g The police refuse to help John. ....
  - h John cannot return the papers because his uncle burnt them. ....
  - i Uncle Elias was a member of the K.K.K. ....
  - j John's murderers are never caught. ....

*After you read*

- 14 How do these help Holmes to solve the case?
- a the postmarks on the envelopes
  - b a piece of light blue paper
  - c a book about the United States
  - d the port of London
  - e one of the workers at the port

- 15 Discuss these questions with another student.
- Why were the three men murdered?
  - Who killed them?
  - How does Holmes feel at the end of the story? Why?
- 16 Work with another student. Have this conversation between Holmes and Inspector Lestrade of the London police.
- Student A:* You are Holmes. You think that John's death is the police's fault. Tell Lestrade why.
- Student B:* You are Lestrade. You think that John's death is Holmes's fault. Tell him why.

### 'The Crown of Diamonds' Part 1

#### Before you read

- 17 Discuss these questions with another student.
- Why might someone have a crown of diamonds in their home?
  - How would they feel? Why?
  - How could they keep it safe from burglars?
  - Why might a private detective be better in some situations than the police?

#### While you read

- 18 Choose the right word.
- Mr Holder feels *pleased* / *worried* after he accepts the crown.
  - Mr Holder has *five* / *six* servants.
  - Mr Holder *likes* / *dislikes* his son's friends.
  - Mr Holder hides the crown in his *bedroom* / *dressing room*.
  - Arthur feels *angry* / *guilty* when his father calls the police.
  - At first, Holmes is interested in the *outside* / *inside* of Mr Holder's house.
  - Mary thinks that Arthur *is* / *is not* a thief.
  - Lucy* / *Mary* has a boyfriend with a wooden leg.
  - The cupboard in the wall was opened with *Mr Holder's* / *another* key.
  - Holmes thinks that the crown was broken *outside* / *inside* the house.

#### After you read

- 19 Why is Holmes interested in
- the ground outside Mr Holder's house?
  - the man with the wooden leg?
  - the lock of the cupboard in the wall?
  - the shape of the crown?
  - the sound of a breaking crown?
  - Arthur's shoes?
- 20 There are eight mistakes in this description of the night when the diamonds disappear. What are they? Correct them.
- Mr Holder told Arthur and Mary about the crown while they were having dinner. Arthur thought that the crown would be safe in the cupboard in the dressing room. Later, Arthur asked his father for some money, but his father calmly refused. Mr Holder checked the crown, spoke to Lucy Parr and went to bed. He was woken at three o'clock in the morning by a loud noise. He found Arthur in the next room with the crown in his hands. Mary rushed into the room and screamed. Arthur told his father where the missing diamonds were and his father insulted him. The police were called and Arthur was taken away.
- 21 Discuss these questions with another students.
- Was Mr Holder wise to take the crown home with him? Why (not)?
  - Why does Holmes think Arthur is innocent?

### 'The Crown of Diamonds' Part 2

#### Before you read

- 22 If Arthur is innocent, who do you think is the real thief? Why? Discuss your thoughts with another student.