

## **The Merit of English Section**

### **Junior Division**

**Name of Winner : Lui Sophia**

**Name of School : Diocesan Girls' School**

**Book Title : *Sherlock Holmes, The Complete  
Novels and Stories, Volume II***

**Author : Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**

**Publisher : Bantam Dell, A Division of Random  
House, Inc.**

Detectives, mysteries, and adventures. Those have always been my favoured types of novels. They were adrenaline-pumping, constantly full of action, enthralling, and surprised me, especially Sherlock Holmes. My favourite activity was immersing myself in the pages of Sherlock Holmes' pieces of literature.

This second collection of Sherlock Holmes stories opens with *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, a frightening

book of murder set on the lonely Grimpen Moor. It has the reputation of being the best murder mystery ever written, and I must say that I agree. According to Dr James Mortimer, Sir Charles Baskerville's life is at risk here. A demonic hound is claimed to have haunted the house since the Civil War. Watson is suspicious of Barrymore, the butler, who appears to be signalling someone on the moor at night with a candle from a window. Also suspected are Mortimer, Frankland, and his estranged daughter, Laura. To apprehend criminal Jack Stapleton, Holmes and Watson use the tiny town of Baskerville as bait. Instead of catching the train out of Dartmoor, Holmes and Watson hide with Inspector Lestrade and are able to kill the hound as soon as it attacks the intended victim. Despite the fact that the plot is entirely fictitious, it is based on true events. The tale of Squire Richard Cabell of Brook Hall, in the parish of Buckfastleigh, Devon, served as an inspiration for the Baskerville story of a hellish hound and a cursed rural

squire. It served as the basis for the Baskerville story about a devilish dog and a cursed rural squire. I found Holmes' behaviour amusing at times, such as waiting for a promised interview in his dressing gown. Who would want to meet a baronet dressed so casually or privately? The Hound of the Baskervilles has a nice storyline as well. The work contains the outward "curse" storyline, two red-herring subplots involving Selden and the other stranger living on the moor, the actual events as described by Watson, and the underlying plan to be discovered by Holmes. Isn't it clever and fascinating?

One of my favourites is The Adventure of the Dying Detective. Holmes is a very exceptional performer, concocting these absurd yet genius schemes. Dr Watson is dispatched to care for Sherlock Holmes, who looks to be dying from a rare tropical illness. As he waits, Watson examines a number of relics in Holmes' chamber. When Watson touches anything, Holmes becomes upset,

implying that he does not want his personal items disturbed. According to Watson, Culverton Smith will pay a visit to Holmes. Inspector Morton arrives to seize Culverton Smith for the attempted assassination of Sherlock Holmes and the assassination of his nephew. Holmes claims that his illness was fabricated as a ruse to persuade Smith to confess to his nephew's murder. In my opinion, Holmes is not taking care of himself. Fasting for days only to look like he's dying isn't good for him. He's rather cunning, using vaseline, belladonna, rouge, and beeswax to make himself look mad. I would never consider going to such lengths to apprehend a killer. To think of it, Holmes was even careful not to let Watson get too near to him, lest Watson figure out that he was lying with all his medical talents.

I found *The Adventures of the Cardboard Box* to be both exhilarating and terrifying. The premise had me very disgusted at first. What an atrocity! Two freshly cut

human ears in a package! Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard believes the tragedy was caused by a prank perpetrated by a medical student. According to Holmes, it looks like evidence of a serious crime. Miss Cushing received the present from Belfast, where one of her former boarding school boarders was born. Oliver Lestrade, depending on Holmes' intelligence, is ready to catch Browner - the murderer - when his ship arrives in London. The actual villain of the story is Sarah Cushing, who fell in love with Browner and tried to seduce her. She poisoned her brother-in-law by poisoning her mind and driving her sister Mary into an affair. But the ear-severer wasn't Sarah; it was Mary's husband, Browner. I'd never heard of anything that wicked and terrible before. Who on earth bashes people's heads with a stick and then slices off one of their ears?

There was also *The Red Circle Adventure*, which left an indelible impression on my memory. This was a story

of a bearded lodger who offered to pay double Mrs Warren monthly rent if he could have the room on his own terms. Since then, Mrs Warren, her husband, and their maid have not seen or heard from him. He has gone to great pains to ensure that no one has seen him since his "return" on the first night of his "residence." After the landlady has left, Holmes informs Dr Watson that the person in Mrs Warren's home is unlikely to be the bearded man who made the arrangements. Holmes and Watson pay a visit to Mrs Warren's house while the lodger eats on his chair in the hopes of catching a criminal. They learn that he has been writing his requests methodically in order to disguise his or her gender. He and his bearded buddy are in distress and need to find a safe refuge. At nightfall, Holmes and Watson are present to see the Italian man/lantern woman's signals. When Holmes and Watson learn that the signaller has been stopped, they rush to the house, where they are surprised to encounter Inspector Gregson and others. The lads are

taken aback by her obvious happiness in seeing them, but because their actions were purely in self-defence, they are unlikely to face charges. From my perspective, this is an odd yet intriguing narrative.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle employed a variety of literary tactics in every Sherlock Holmes novel, including appealing to the readers' senses of touch, sight, and smell; onomatopoeia; and a plethora of imagery. Sir Doyle made excellent use of the English language. The author used vivid settings that were depicted properly and vividly, as well as a lot of dialogues to keep the reader engaged. Despite the fact that this is a work of fiction, I believe that many of the events described in it might occur in real life. From my perspective, Sherlock Holmes is a not-so-practical private investigator. In earlier stories not included in this book, Holmes was addicted to cocaine and/or opium, which was bad for his health. However, he hasn't put narcotics into his system in this

book, so you might argue he is wise enough to learn from his mistakes. Holmes has an obsessive mentality. He works obsessively on all of his investigations, and his deductive abilities are outstanding. He can fall into periods of "depression" in-between cases, and he always believes that women are "inscrutable" and "unworthy of his trust." This is demonstrated in multiple stories throughout the book, such as "Holmes leaned forward and laid his long, thin fingers upon the woman's shoulder." He had almost hypnotic powers of soothing when he wished. The "scared look faded from her eyes, and her agitated features smoothed into their usual commonplace" in *The Adventure of the Red Circle* illustrates the idea that women's minds may be easily misled and manipulated. Despite the fact that I am a woman, I agree with Holmes that women can't be trusted. Most women aren't strong, and they might be easily swayed by other people's opinions.

Sherlock Holmes' logical reasoning is something I appreciate much. Holmes' reasoning starts with a well-established assumption and attempts to prove another proposition using previously "known" data. When Holmes enters a dingy room with the premise that the area has been plagued by murders and that the dead woman on the floor is most likely another victim of the same predator, he gathers evidence-blood, nicotine stains, ash in a corner, a shard of glass-and narrows the scope of the available evidence until his premise is the only logical conclusion left. This is Holmes' logic: he first creates an opinion about a suspect based on previously accessible information that isn't necessarily related to the case and then seeks proof to prove that person's guilt. On the other hand, Watson is an intellectual and modest guy who falls short of his partner, or "friend's," abilities. He has a medical practice, but that doesn't stop him from attending to Holmes's numerous cases and assisting him in the recording and publication of them.

To be honest, as two of the most popular fictional characters ever created, Holmes and Watson are both people we can learn from. However, I recommend that readers don't learn everything from them, such as Holmes' social interactions and Watson's intransigence. If you want a taste of detective adrenaline through reading, I strongly suggest this book.