Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson

The story you are going to read takes place in London at the start of the twentieth century. It is about London's famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes and his good friend, Dr Watson. Dr Watson helps Holmes with his detective cases.

When Sherlock Holmes moved to London in 1874 he did not have much money and his family had to help him. In 1881 he decided to share the cost of his rooms at 221B Baker Street with Dr John H. Watson, and this is how Holmes and Watson became good friends.

André Morell as Dr Watson and Peter Cushing as Sherlock Holmes in the film *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959).

Watson tells us a lot of things about Holmes: he is not a difficult person to live with because he is quiet and has regular habits. For example, he usually goes to bed around ten at night and gets up very early in the morning. He works on his cases with a lot of energy, but sometimes he gets very bored and sits in the living room and does nothing.

Watson also tells us that he is untidy and his desk is always full of papers. Mrs Hudson is the housekeeper [1] who tidies the rooms. We know that Holmes plays the violin and wears Persian slippers [2] at home. He often uses chemistry equipment [3] to help him solve cases.

Holmes is an excellent detective and he often surprises Watson with his solutions to difficult cases.

PROJECT ON THE WEB

Let's visit the Sherlock Holmes Museum

Connect to the Internet and go to www.blackcat-cideb.com or www.cideb.it. Insert the title or part of the title of the book into our search engine.

Click on the Internet project link. Go down the page until you see this title and click on the relevant link for this project.

In London there is an interesting museum all about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective. Find the answers to these questions on the site.

1 Where is the Sherlock Holmes Museum?
2 When did Sherlock Holmes live there, according to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories?
3 When was the house built?
4 Where was Holmes's study?
5 What are some of things you can see in Holmes's study?

1. **housekeeper** : someone who does all the work in another person's house.
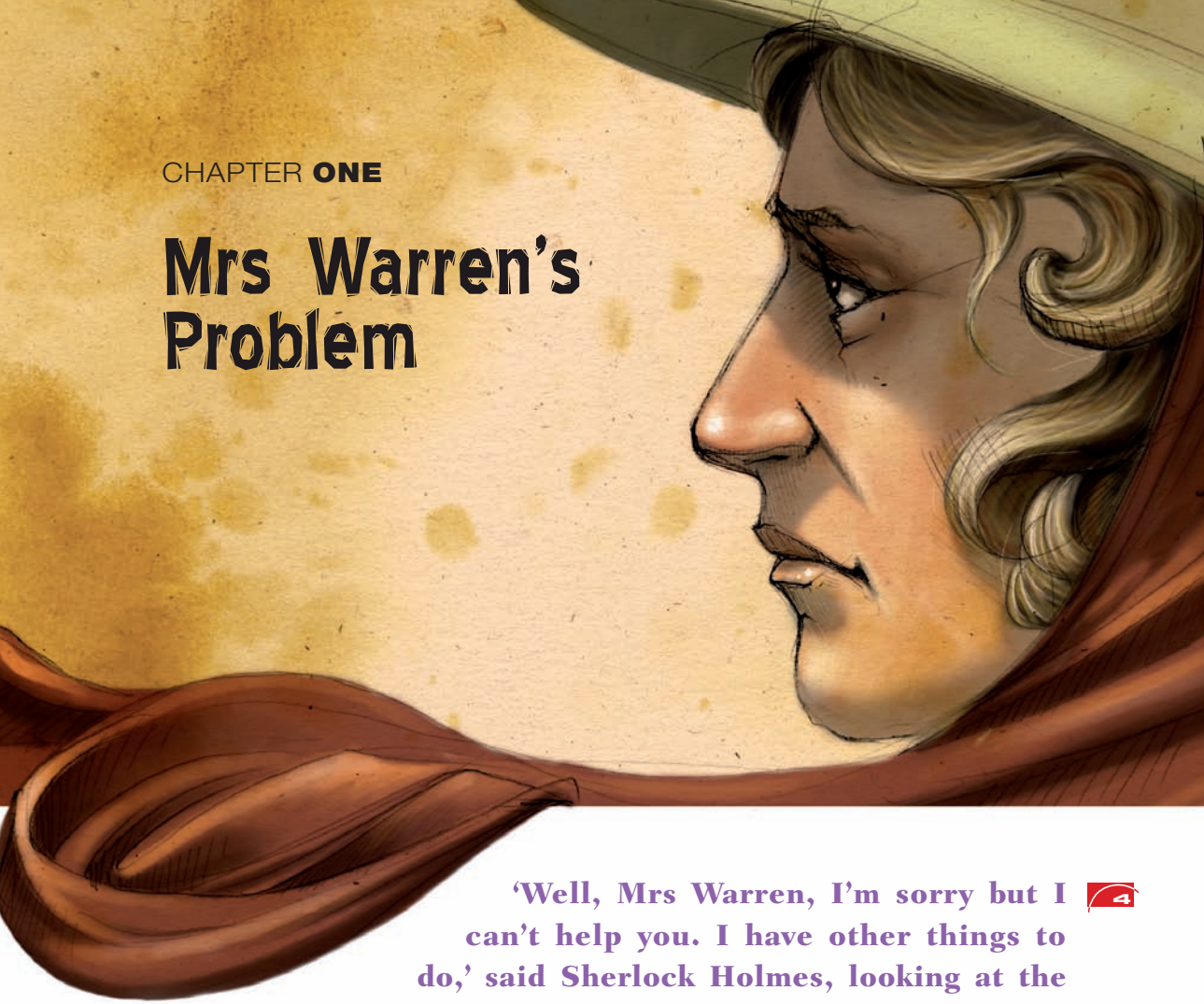
2. **Persian slippers** :

3. **chemistry equipment** :

Mrs Warren's Problem

'Well, Mrs Warren, I'm sorry but I can't help you. I have other things to do,' said Sherlock Holmes, looking at the papers on his desk.

But Mrs Warren did not go away.

'You helped my lodger [1] Mr Hobbs last year,' said Mrs Warren, looking at Holmes.

'Yes, I remember,' said Holmes.

'Mr Hobbs said you are a kind, helpful man. Why can't you help me?' asked Mrs Warren.

Holmes looked at her and said, 'Alright, Mrs Warren, tell me about your problem. I understand your new lodger always stays in his rooms and you never see him. There's nothing strange about that!'

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1. **lodger** : a person who rents a room in another person's house.

'But I'm really afraid and I can't sleep,' said Mrs Warren. 'I hear his quick footsteps from morning to night, but I never see him. Why is he hiding? My husband is worried too, but he is away all day at work. I'm alone at home with the girl who helps me clean, and I'm very frightened.'

Holmes looked at her kindly and said, 'Please sit down, Mrs Warren. Now if I decide to help you, I must know everything. Do you understand? The smallest thing can be the most important. You said that the man came ten days ago and paid you for two weeks. Is that correct?'

'Yes,' said Mrs Warren, 'I asked him to pay two pounds a week for a small sitting-room and a bedroom at the top of the house.'

'Well?' asked Holmes.

'He said, "I'll pay you five pounds a week if I can have the rooms on my conditions." [2]

I'm a poor woman, sir, and Mr Warren doesn't make much money. I needed the extra money. The man gave me ten pounds and said, "I can give you ten pounds every two weeks for a long time on my conditions."'

'What were his conditions?' asked Holmes.

'Well, he wanted a key to the house and that was alright. Lodgers often want a key. And he did not want anyone to disturb [3] him.'

'There is nothing strange about that, Mrs Warren,' said Holmes.

'No, but I never see him – no one sees him! He only went out of the house on the first night.'

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2. **on my conditions** : following the rules I give you.
3. **disturb** : (here) go into his rooms.

'Oh, he went out on the first night?' asked Holmes.

'Yes, sir, and he came back very late when we were all in bed,' said Mrs Warren.

'But, his meals?' asked Holmes.

'Oh, we leave his meals on a chair outside his room when he rings the bell,' said Mrs Warren. 'And he rings again when he finishes eating. If he wants anything, he writes it in capital letters on a piece of paper and leaves it on the chair.'

'He writes in capital letters?' asked Holmes.

'Yes, sir, just the word in pencil, and nothing more,' said Mrs Warren. 'Look, here are the notes he writes. This one says SOAP. Here's another one that says MATCH. [4] And this is one he wrote this morning – it says DAILY GAZETTE. I leave the newspaper with his breakfast every morning.'

Mrs Warren gave Holmes the two pieces of paper and he looked at them with interest.

'Oh dear, Watson,' said Holmes, 'this is really a bit strange. Why does this man write in capital letters? It is much easier and quicker to write normally. What do you think, Watson?'

'He probably doesn't want Mrs Warren to see his handwriting,' I said.

'But why?' asked Holmes. 'Perhaps you're right, Watson. But why are his messages so short? Why doesn't he write in sentences?'

'I really don't know,' I said.

4. **match** :

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

KET

1 COMPREHENSION CHECK

Are these sentences 'Right' (A) or 'Wrong' (B)? If there is not enough information to answer 'Right' (A) or 'Wrong' (B), choose 'Doesn't say' (C). There is an example at the beginning (0).

0 There were lots of important papers on Sherlock Holmes's desk.
   A Right   **B** Wrong   **C** Doesn't say

1 In the past Mr Hobbs was Mrs Warren's lodger.
   A Right   **B** Wrong   **C** Doesn't say

2 Mrs Warren was a short, old woman.
   A Right   **B** Wrong   **C** Doesn't say

3 Sherlock Holmes decided to listen to Mrs Warren's problem.
   A Right   **B** Wrong   **C** Doesn't say

4 Mrs Warren and her husband were rich people.
   A Right   **B** Wrong   **C** Doesn't say

5 The lodger wanted a key to the house.
   A Right   **B** Wrong   **C** Doesn't say

6 The lodger had his meals in Mrs Warren's kitchen.
   A Right   **B** Wrong   **C** Doesn't say

7 He used a pencil to write his messages.
   A Right   **B** Wrong   **C** Doesn't say

8 Dr Watson was an old friend of Mrs Warren.
   A Right   **B** Wrong   **C** Doesn't say

2 PREPOSITIONS

Complete the sentences with a preposition from the box.

about   at   behind   for   in   on   with

1 The lodger wrote only one word ………… a piece of paper.
2 He always stayed ………… his rooms and never went out.
3 Holmes looked at the pieces of paper ………… interest.
4 Mrs Warren told Holmes and Watson ………… the strange lodger.
5 The bedroom was ………… the top of the house.
6 Mrs Warren talked to Holmes ………… two hours.
7 Holmes sat in a big chair ………… his desk.

3 MRS WARREN'S HOUSE

Mr and Mrs Warren live in a typical Victorian house like the one below. Look at the illustration of Mrs Warren's house and label each room with the words below. Use your dictionary to help you check any words you don't understand.

1	☐ dining room	7	☐ master bedroom
2	☐ kitchen	8	☐ pantry
3	☐ lodger's bathroom	9	☐ scullery
4	☐ lodger's bedroom	10	☐ servant's bedroom
5	☐ main entrance	11	☐ sitting-room
6	☐ master bathroom	12	☐ study