**Extract from ‘A Study in Scarlet’ by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**

*This extract is from the beginning of the novel. Dr John Watson, who has been serving with the army in the Afghan war as an army doctor, has now returned to London.*

The campaign brought honours and promotion to many, but for me it had nothing but misfortune and disaster. I was removed from my brigade and attached to the Berkshires, with whom I served at the fatal battle of Maiwand. There I was struck on the shoulder by a Jezail bullet, which shattered the bone and grazed the subclavian artery. I should have fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly, who threw me across a pack-horse, and succeeded in bringing me safely to the British lines.

Worn with pain, and weak from the prolonged hardships which I had undergone, I was removed, with a great train of wounded sufferers. For months my life was despaired of, and when at last I came to myself and became convalescent, I was so weak and emaciated that a medical board determined that not a day should be lost in sending me back to England.

I had neither kith nor kin in England, and was therefore as free as air—or as free as an income of eleven shillings and sixpence a day will permit a man to be. Under such circumstances, I naturally gravitated to London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained. There I stayed for some time at a private hotel in the Strand, leading a comfortless, meaningless existence, and spending such money as I had, considerably more freely than I ought. So alarming did the state of my finances become, that I soon realized that I must either leave the metropolis and rusticate somewhere in the country, or that I must make a complete alteration in my style of living. Choosing the latter alternative, I began by making up my mind to leave the hotel, and to take up my quarters in some less pretentious and less expensive domicile.

On the very day that I had come to this conclusion, I was standing at the Criterion Bar, when someone tapped me on the shoulder, and turning round I recognized young Stamford. The sight of a friendly face in the great wilderness of London is a pleasant thing indeed to a lonely man. In old days Stamford had never been a particular crony of mine, but now I hailed him with enthusiasm, and he, in his turn, appeared to be delighted to see me. In the exuberance of my joy, I asked him to lunch with me at the Holborn, and we started off together in a hansom.

“Whatever have you been doing with yourself, Watson?” he asked in undisguised wonder, as we rattled through the crowded London streets. “You are as thin as a lath and as brown as a nut.”

I gave him a short sketch of my adventures, and had hardly concluded it by the time that we reached our destination.

“Poor devil!” he said, commiseratingly, after he had listened to my misfortunes. “What are you up to now?”

“Looking for lodgings.” I answered. “Trying to solve the problem as to whether it is possible to get comfortable rooms at a reasonable price.”

“That’s a strange thing,” remarked my companion; “you are the second man to-day that has used that expression to me.” Young Stamford looked rather strangely at me over his wine-glass. “You don’t know Sherlock Holmes yet,” he said; “perhaps you would not care for him as a constant companion.”

“Why, what is there against him?”

“Oh, I didn’t say there was anything against him. He is a little queer in his ideas—an enthusiast in some branches of science. As far as I know he is a decent fellow enough. His studies are very desultory and eccentric, but he has amassed a lot of out-of-the way knowledge. You mustn’t blame me if you don’t get on with him,” he said; “I know nothing more of him than I have learned from meeting him occasionally in the laboratory. You proposed this arrangement, so you must not hold me responsible.”

“It seems to me, Stamford,” I added, looking hard at my companion, “that you have some reason for washing your hands of the matter. Is this fellow’s temper so formidable, or what is it?”

“It is not easy to express the inexpressible,” he answered with a laugh. “Holmes is a little too scientific for my tastes—it approaches to cold-bloodedness. I could imagine his giving a friend a little pinch of the latest vegetable alkaloid, not out of malevolence, you understand, but simply out of a spirit of inquiry in order to have an accurate idea of the effects. To do him justice, I think that he would take it himself with the same readiness. He appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge. When it comes to beating the subjects in the dissecting-rooms with a stick, it is certainly taking rather a bizarre shape.”

“Beating the subjects!”

“Yes, to verify how far bruises may be produced after death. I saw him at it with my own eyes. Heaven knows what the objects of his studies are. But here we are, and you must form your own impressions about him.”

**Glossary:**

Metropolis – A big city

Rusticate – Waste time

Holborn – A area of London

Queer – Odd

Q1. Read lines 1-12. List four things the writer tells the reader about what happened to the narrator, Dr Watson, before he returned to England [4]

Q2. Read through lines 4-158. How does the writer use language to create sympathy for the narrator, Dr Watson? You may wish to comment on:

* Words and phrases
* Language features and techniques
* Sentence forms [8]

Q3. You now need to think about the whole of the extract.

How has the writer structured to the text to make the reader curious about Sherlock Holmes, who Dr Watson is going to meet?

You could write about:

* What the writer chooses to focus on in what order
* How the writer changes the focus on the extract
* Any other structural features you notice [8]

Q4. Focus your answer on the second half of the source, from line 40 to the end.

A student, having read this section of the text said: “The writer uses Watson and Stamford’s dialogue to make Sherlock Holmes seem to be an exciting and unique character.”

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

* Write about your own impression of the character
* Evaluate how the writer has created that impression
* Support your opinions with reference to the text **[20 ]**

**Q5.**

Write a description of a strange and sinister location. Use this picture for guidance.



You decided to enter a school writing competition where you have to write about a situation where a character overcame a challenge.

**END OF QUESTIONS**