

# The veiled lady



This playscript features the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, who was created by the author Arthur Conan Doyle. The Sherlock Holmes stories became so popular that Conan Doyle was able to give up his job as a doctor and become a full-time writer instead.

**Setting:** A Victorian parlour. A lady dressed in black is sitting by a fire. A veil hides her face.

*Enter Sherlock Holmes.*

**Holmes:** Good morning, madam. My name is Sherlock Holmes. (*lady stands and shakes Holmes' hand*) Ha, I'm glad to see Mrs Hudson has had the good sense to light a fire. And you shall have hot coffee, madam. I see that you are shivering.

**Lady:** It is not the cold which makes me shiver. (*sitting down*)

**Holmes:** What then?

**Lady:** It is fear, Mr Holmes. It is terror. (*raising her veil to show a shocked face*)

**Holmes:** You mustn't be afraid. (*patting her arm*) We shall soon set matters right, I have no doubt. You have come by train, I see.

**Lady:** How do you know?

**Holmes:** I observe a return ticket tucked inside your glove. You must have started out early. Yet you had a lengthy drive in a dog-cart, along busy roads, before you reached the station.

**Lady** (*raising her eyebrows*): How ...?

**Holmes:** There is no mystery, madam. The left arm of your coat is spattered with mud in no fewer than seven places. The marks are fresh. Only a dog-cart throws up mud in that particular way. And even then – only if you sit to the left of the driver.

**Lady:** You are perfectly correct. I left home before six this morning and came in by the first train to Waterloo. Sir, I have no-one to turn to for help. My friend Mrs Farintosh, whom you once helped, gave me your address. Oh, sir, do you think you could help me, too? I hope you may advise me how to walk amid the dangers that surround me.

**Holmes:** I am all attention, madam. Tell me everything that will help me advise you upon the matter.

Dramatisation of a scene from 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band' by Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930)



1 Is the lady shivering with cold or with fear?  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

2 If you were designing costumes for this play, how would you describe the lady's costume? Include as much detail as possible.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 marks

3 What makes the lady think that Sherlock Holmes might help her?  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

4 If you were Sherlock Holmes, what reason might you consider for the lady keeping her face hidden on her journey?  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

5 What does Sherlock Holmes say and do to reassure the lady?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 marks

6 What transport did the lady use before boarding the train? What clue reveals this to Sherlock Holmes?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 marks

7 What does Holmes say to tell the woman that he is listening carefully?  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

8 Why are some words in brackets?  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

9 In a story a conversation would include tag words, such as 'said' or 'asked'. What punctuation is used here to show that a character is beginning to speak?  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

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