



The Dying Detective

Arthur Conan Doyle

Prose

The detective Sherlock Holmes was seriously ill. He wanted to meet his assistant Watson. He asked his landlady to get him. Watson was surprised to see the condition of his master. Was Watson able to save his master? Read on to know more about the underlying story behind Holmes' sickness.

Mrs. Hudson, the landlady of Sherlock Holmes, came to me and said, "Mr. Holmes is dying, Mr. Watson. For three days he has been sinking, and I doubt if he will last another day. He would not let me get a doctor. I told him I could not stand it anymore and would get a doctor." He replied, "Let it be Watson then."

I was horrified for I had not heard about his illness before. I rushed for my hat and coat. As we drove back, I asked her about the details.

"There is little I can tell you, sir. He has been working on a case down at Rotherhithe, near the river, and has brought this illness back with him. He took to bed on Wednesday afternoon and has never moved since. For three days neither food nor drink has passed his lips." "Why did you not call a doctor?" I asked.

"He wouldn't have it, sir. I didn't dare to disobey him."

- How did Watson feel when he heard of Holmes' illness?
- Why didn't the landlady call the doctor?

He was indeed a sad sight. In the dim light of a foggy November day, the sick-room was a gloomy spot, but it was

the **gaunt** face staring from the bed that brought chill to my heart. His eyes had the brightness of fever, his cheeks were flushed, and his hand **twitched** all the time. He lay listless.

"My dear fellow!" I cried approaching him.

"Stand back! Stand right back!" he cried.

"But why? I want to help you," I said.

"Certainly, Watson, but it is for your own sake."

"For my sake?" I was surprised.

"I know what is the matter with me. It is the disease from Sumatra. It is deadly and **contagious**, Watson – that's it, by touch."

"Good heavens, Holmes! Do you think this can stop me?" I said advancing towards him.

"If you will stand there, I will talk. If you don't you must leave the room," said my master.

I have always given in to Holmes' wishes. But now my feelings as a doctor were aroused. I was at least his master in the sick-room.

"Holmes," I said, "you are not yourself whether you like it or not. I will examine your symptoms and treat you."