

---

## Stylistic and Genre Features of The Adventure of the Speckled Band

The genre of the detective story is one of the most remarkable categories of short fiction. The Sherlock Holmes stories are genuine masterpieces created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and the usage of the detective stories elements has contributed to their popularity. In “The Adventure of the Speckled Band,” the author employs the opportunities of the genre in order to provoke readers’ interest and keep them thrilled till the end of the narration. Considering the key components of the story, namely, characters, setting, plot, problem, and solution, it is possible to trace specific techniques that add up to creating the atmosphere of mystery in this case.

To begin with, characters play a pivotal role in the context of a short story. In this respect, “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” is not an exception. The particulars of the genre are confirmed: the main characters are the criminal (Dr. Roylott), the possible victim (Helen), and the detective (Holmes). The figure of the criminal is prominent since it is the engine of the development of the events. Describing Dr. Roylott, the author introduces another popular technique of detective stories: some secondary characters may try to throw the main character and the reader off track. Helen provides some important information about her stepfather: “He had no friends at all save the wandering gypsies, and he would give these vagabonds leave to encamp upon the few acres of bramble-covered land.” One may consider the gypsies to be another criminal-like character of the story because they are suspected to be responsible for Julia’s death. However, it is a wrong speculation, and this technique is an effective instrument to lead one astray.

Further, the main victim character is Helen because her life is in danger. Although her sister Julia also becomes the victim, little is known about her, and the narrator emphasizes that solving this mystery is more about saving Helen. Indeed, the expected menace harm can be prevented at the moment, and it becomes the priority of the characters’ actions. Apparently, a detective story should picture the person who will solve the problem as the main character. Just as in all Sherlock Holmes stories, the duo of Mr. Holmes and Mr. Watson is in the focus of readers’ attention, and they not only solve the mystery but also manage to save Helen Stoner. Still, Watson is a more peripheral figure since his function is to narrate and assist Holmes rather than be an active participant in the investigation. Overall, the characters of the story agree with the image of typical detective stories characters.

Another indispensable element of a detective story is the setting. This feature pertains to the location of the action which the author is expected to describe in such detail that readers can

---

### Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

**GET HELP**

---

picture the scene. It becomes especially interesting when the environment is ordinary because the contrast between the secret and the presumably harmless circumstances adds up to the lack of understanding. Detective stories may be subdivided into several types, and the story under discussion pertains to the locked-room mystery subtype. As the term implies, it involves some criminal events that occurred in a closed setting. The only explanation of the events relates to the actions of the present characters, and the figure of the detective opposes the closeted homosocial environment. Thus, this type is notable for a limited room for criminal action.

In the context of the story, the home environment is given. The locked room mystery is classic: "...the door had been fastened upon the inner side, and the windows were blocked by old-fashioned shutters with broad iron bars, which were secured every night. The walls were carefully sounded and were shown to be quite solid all round, and the flooring was also thoroughly examined, with the same result." Doyle displays the rooms of the house, the weird whistling, and the clanging sound. Taken together, these details are small steps toward the denouement. By the end of the story, the setting becomes the central object of consideration because it determines the detection of the crime.

The plot is about the actual story with its structure that ideally consists of a clear beginning, the middle part, and the ending, all necessary descriptions, and details included to make it even more interesting. The detective story genre implies that some secret becomes a linchpin of the plot, and little by little, the story heads to the climax where the criminal is revealed. However, the detective genre has never simply been about "who-did-it?" – it but has to do with reflecting the society and places. As a result, the plot serves as the external instrument to shape the story and, at the same time, the point of internal reference when a reader reflects on social matters and phenomena.

All these features are traced in the Sherlock Holmes story. The beginning of the story is distinguishable because Watson deliberately makes an introduction in which he expresses his opinion about unique cases Sherlock worked on. The central element is the chain of weird events: Julia's death, the beginning of repairs at Helen's house, and whistling sounds at night. The story also gives some food for thought concerning the social order because one may start thinking about money matters and marriages, unusual hobbies and cold calculus. Watson's comments and rhetorical questions are also a valuable instrument of reflection: "How shall I ever forget that dreadful vigil?" The ending of the story is a kind of contemplation because the ethical issues related to the death of the criminal are discussed. Thus, the plot of the story is typical of the genre.

The next element of a detective story, problem, is understood as the actual secret that needs to be solved, usually who committed a crime and why. In this respect, "The Adventure of the

---

## Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

**GET HELP**

---

"Speckled Band" is based on the problem of the mysterious threat that turns out to be a swamp adder. One can argue that there are two aspects of the problem in this story: while the former is about Julia and her strange words before her death, the latter involves Helen and her life. It would be wrong to treat these aspects as separate phenomena because actually, they refer to the same venomous snake. Thus, the problem of the story is binary, and it only stimulates readers' interest. It is notable that a reader is supposed to become a partner of the detective and make an attempt to solve the problem or at least find out the right direction. The genre demands that the clues must be plainly stated and described, and the author does precisely so when he pictures the first meeting with Helen. Together with Mr. Holmes, one examines the house and sees what pushes them to understand: the fastened bed, bell-ropes, and ventilators. The ambiguous word "band" deceives both the detective and the reader. Therefore, the feature required by the genre tradition is present to its full extent.

Last but not least, the proper solution is an integral part of the detective story. Logically, the final element must pertain to the solution or the way the action is resolved because it attributes meaning to reading the story. It is probably one of the most challenging moments for the author. In detective stories, the ending must be believable and corresponding to the previously pictured events, otherwise, a reader will be disappointed. However, Doyle's explanation involves whistling as the way to summon the snake. In 1892, it was believed that snakes were deaf, so Doyle may have made a mistake. As a result, the zoological peculiarities can cloud the overall impression of a reader. Other facts and their interpretation seem to be more concise. Watson briefly describes what happened to Helen and to what conclusion the police arrived when they found Dr. Roylott dead. Only at the end of the story, Mr. Holmes gives a chance to monitor how he was developing his ideas. He presents the same information that a reader received earlier in such a way that all the facts finally make sense.

To sum up, the expressive power of detective short stories is considerable. Although writers sometimes go against the conventional particulars of the genre, they still serve as the necessary elements that help readers orientate themselves within the story and identify its genre. "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" is a good example of the classical detective story. The author operates the critical components of the story, namely, characters, setting, plot, problem, and solution. His choices agree with what modern scholars consider to be the characteristics of the detective story genre. The only exception is the solution because it is hardly believable in the zoological context. Nevertheless, the majority of the genre characteristics are confirmed, and it makes this story a classic example of a detective locked-room mystery.

---

## Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)