Lit. Notes

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Reader’s Guide Questions for “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”**

**by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**

Characters—

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the detective
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the narrator
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the client
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the stepfather
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the dead sister

1. Describe the woman who has come to consult Holmes and Watson early one morning.

How is she dressed? What makes Holmes think he should offer her coffee? What is

odd about her hair?

2. Describe what Helen Stoner tells Holmes about her stepfather. Why did he go to

India? What forced him to leave?

3. What happened to Helen Stoner’s mother and how did her stepfather change after her

mother’s death?

4. The neighbors find Roylott strange. List three odd things about him (focus on an attack, his friends, and his pets).

5. Describe what Helen Stoner hears just before her sister dies. What are her sister’s last

words to her?

6. Why does Helen move into Julia’s room? What frightens her when she does?

7. Describe Dr. Roylott as he appears in Holmes’ room. Describe Dr. Roylott’s behavior also. What does he do to try to frighten Holmes? What does he want Holmes to do?

8. Holmes obtains a copy of Helen Stoner’s mother’s will, and it provides a motive for

Dr. Roylott’s not wishing his stepdaughter ever to marry. Explain.

9. Is the “locked room puzzle” device used in this story? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Explain:

10. The bell-rope Holmes notices in the bedroom would have been used to summon a

servant to the room. What things seem odd about the rope?

11. When Holmes examined Roylott’s room, what **three** things looked out of place to him?

12. Holmes knew he wanted to examine the ventilator. What clue triggered his desire to inspect it?

13. Holmes and Watson see Dr. Roylott return home from their window at the Crown

Inn. What do they witness that is another example of his terrible temper?

14. What did Holmes notice odd about the bed?

15. Give details about exactly what happens after Holmes and Watson hear the whistle.

16. Describe what they find when they enter Dr. Roylott’s room after the dreadful shriek.

What is the speckled band? How did the doctor die?

17. Go back to question #11. How did Roylott use each of the **three** items?

18. What had caused the metal clanging sound the sisters had heard?

19. Was there an unjustly accused suspect? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Explain:

20. Why do you think Holmes and Watson let the police believe Roylott died accidently? List **two** distinct reasons.

Challenge Q.

Earlier in the story Holmes warned Miss Stoner that if Dr. Roylott suspected he was

nearby, his journey would be in vain. What did he mean by that? How do you think

the doctor might have altered his plan if he had known Holmes was nearby?

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Lit. Notes

**Questions for Further Discussion on “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”**

1. One tradition of a good detective story is that the criminal must be clever and a worthy

opponent to the detective. In what way does Dr. Roylott meet this requirement?

2. Sherlock Holmes is known for his cleverness, his ability to make quick, rational

deductions from what he sees and hears. Write a paragraph demonstrating that

Holmes has these qualities based on what he is able to deduce in this story.

3. In your opinion, does the story meet the requirements of a good detective story?

4.The mood of the story is the atmosphere created by the author. What details

contribute to the mood of terror Conan Doyle paints here? Look in particular at

the ending, beginning with the signal light...

5. Do you feel that Dr. Roylott deserved what happened to him at the end of the

story? Explain