



The Adventure of the Three Students

A2 Version

Part 1: The Stolen Examination

Holmes and Watson are staying in a university town. One evening a college tutor called Hilton Soames comes to see them. He is very worried.

Tomorrow there is an important examination. The winner gets a scholarship — money to support their studies. The exam includes a secret Greek text that students must translate. Soames received the printed test paper today. He read it carefully at his desk, then went out for an hour to visit a friend.

When he came back, he found that someone had moved his papers. There were pencil shavings on the desk. Someone had been copying the questions. Soames's servant, Bannister, had accidentally left a key in the outer door. Any of three students on the staircase above could have entered.

Part 2: Clues

Holmes visits the rooms and looks carefully at everything. He stands at the window and realises that only a tall person could see the desk from outside. He visits all three

students. He pretends to admire the old rooms. During each visit, he breaks his pencil and borrows theirs — examining it carefully.

Holmes also searches the bedroom next to Soames's study. Behind the curtain where clothes hang, he finds a small piece of black clay — the same type as on the desk. Someone hid there.

Early the next morning, Holmes goes to the university athletics ground. He collects samples of the black clay used in the long-jump pit — the area where athletes land after jumping as far as they can. The clay matches exactly.

Part 3: Gilchrist Confesses

Holmes calls everyone together. He asks Bannister if he sat in the chair to hide something. Bannister admits the truth. He let the student escape after Soames left.

Holmes asks Soames to call Gilchrist downstairs. Gilchrist is tall, athletic, and a keen long jumper. When he sees Bannister's face, he knows it is over. He falls to his knees and cries.

Holmes explains what happened. Gilchrist was walking back from the athletics ground with his spiked jumping shoes. He is tall enough to see through the window. He saw the exam paper on the desk. He saw the key in the open door. He went inside and started copying the questions. When he heard Soames coming, he grabbed his shoes and hid behind the curtain in the bedroom. He forgot his gloves on the chair.

Bannister — who had worked for Gilchrist's father years ago and was loyal to the family — came in and saw the gloves. He sat on the chair to hide them. He waited until Soames left, then let Gilchrist out and told him to do the right thing.

Gilchrist has already written a letter to Soames. He is withdrawing from the examination. He has accepted a job as an officer in the police in Rhodesia — a country in southern Africa — and is leaving immediately. Holmes shakes his hand and says he hopes Gilchrist will do better in the future. The examination can continue fairly, and the college reputation is safe.