

# The Adventure of the Dancing Men

*Simplified from the original story by Arthur Conan Doyle*

## Version 2: CEFR A2 — Elementary

*Note for teachers and students: This is a very simple retelling of the same story. Words and ideas have been made as easy as possible.*

### Part 1: A Mysterious Picture

Sherlock Holmes was a famous detective. He lived in London with his friend, Dr. Watson. Holmes was very good at solving mysteries.

One day, a man came to see Holmes. His name was Hilton Cubitt. He lived in a big house in the countryside. He was very worried.

He showed Holmes a strange picture. It had small stick figures in it. The figures looked like dancing people. Hilton did not understand what the picture meant.

Hilton told his story. He had a wife named Elsie. She was American. Before they married, Elsie said to him: "I have a bad past. Please never ask me about it." Hilton agreed. They got married and were very happy.

Then, one month ago, Elsie got a letter from America. She read it, and her face went white. She burned the letter. After that, she was always frightened.

Soon, someone started leaving these dancing-figure pictures near their house. The pictures were on windows, on doors, and in the garden. When Elsie saw one of the pictures, she fainted.

### Part 2: The Secret Code

Holmes understood that the pictures were a secret code. Each dancing figure was a letter. Together, the figures made words.

Holmes studied the pictures carefully. He found that the messages said things like "AM HERE ABE SLANEY" and "COME ELSIE." One message was very frightening. It said: "ELSIE PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD." This was a death threat.

Holmes sent a message to the police in New York. They told him that Abe Slaney was a very dangerous criminal from Chicago in America.

Holmes knew the situation was very dangerous. He and Watson travelled quickly to Hilton's house. But they were too late.

### Part 3: The Shooting

During the night, there was a shooting at the house. Hilton was dead. Elsie was badly hurt. The police thought Elsie had shot her husband.

But Holmes looked carefully at the room. He found a bullet hole in the window. This meant a third person had fired a gun from outside. Holmes also found footprints and a bullet case in the garden.

Holmes now knew what had happened. He wrote a short note in the secret code. It said: "COME HERE AT ONCE." He sent the note to Abe Slaney at a nearby farm.

### Part 4: The Arrest

Abe Slaney came to the house. He thought the note was from Elsie. When he walked in, Holmes pointed a gun at him. The police put handcuffs on him.

Holmes told Slaney that Elsie was nearly dead. Slaney was very upset. He said he loved Elsie and would never hurt her.

Then Slaney explained what happened. He and Elsie had known each other in America. Her father was the leader of a criminal gang. He invented the dancing figures code. Elsie left the gang and went to England to start a new life.

Slaney came to England to find her. He sent her messages using the secret code. He wanted her to come back to him. But she refused.

One night, Elsie came to the window to talk to Slaney. She brought money for him and asked him to go away. Slaney tried to pull her through the window. Then Hilton ran in with a gun. The two men both shot at each other. Hilton missed. Slaney's shot killed Hilton. Slaney ran away. Elsie, very sad and shocked, then shot herself.

### The End

The police took Slaney away. He went to prison for a long time.

Elsie got better. She did not marry again. She spent her life helping poor people and looking after her husband's home.

Holmes used the dancing men code for good — to catch a dangerous man.