

Jan Stauber Grant, 2014-2015

Joyce Smith, Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, Colorado Springs, CO. *“Sherlock Holmes in Multiple Formats: Audio, Braille, and American Sign Language”* for grades 6-8

Proposal Objective: This project has a two-fold mission: (1) to increase the reading interest of students by focusing on the mystery/detective genre and (2) to help encourage relationships between the visually impaired and the hearing impaired middle school students as they work together to complete various activities associated with Sherlock Holmes and/or the mystery detective genre.

At the onset of implementing this project, the librarian and the language arts teachers from the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind were excited to get started. We met at the beginning of the school year (2014-15) to discuss ideas. A study unit, which would focus on the mystery/detective genre, would be introduced in their individual classes during the second quarter since it would take time to acquire reading materials in large print, braille, audio and electronic formats to meet student needs. To give both schools ample time to complete this unit, group activities were planned for the end of the quarter, which was the week before the school’s winter break.

Our teachers began the unit by introducing students to the concept of mystery detective literature before students read abridged versions of short stories by Arthur Conan Doyle from *Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes*, adapted by Judith Conaway. The other optional book considered was *The Tales of Sherlock Holmes* retold by L.L. Owens. The Judith Conaway adaptation was chosen because the teachers felt that the readability and comprehension level would best fit the needs of all of our middle school students. Teachers incorporated supplemental resources to help further student understanding of the mystery/detective genre and Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes in particular.

Teacher collaboration was tremendous and contributed to the success of this project. Ideas and resources were freely shared, such as an interactive clue game adapted for the Mimeo board by one of the teachers and this online resource <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/ingredients-mystery>. Student interest in Sherlock Holmes was more than stimulated, most students became really engaged with the character, which was evident at the end of the unit that culminated with two days of student activities. Students from the School for the Blind, under the direction of their language arts teacher, produced two well-written plays based on two of the short stories they read in class. The students performed before the middle school staff and students, assisted by the language arts teachers from the School for the Deaf who provided sign language interpretation. The School for the Deaf created a “Who Dunit” scavenger hunt activity. Someone stole a replica of the school mascot, a ceramic rendition of the beloved school “Bulldog” that finds his home in the office at School for the Deaf, under the watchful eye of the capable administrative assistant - who entered the area where the students had gathered for the day and frantically announced that the bulldog was missing. The hunt was on... To encourage student interaction between the schools, students were grouped so that both schools were represented. They were then given directions and their first clue, which led them to a series of clues until all were gathered and the bulldog was found. Clues were placed in various buildings around campus. Students enjoyed both days of activities, as verified by some of their comments:

“Loved it!”

“I loved acting like a detective.”

“I had fun on the scavenger hunt.”

“The play was great!”

“My favorite part was the play.”

“Everything was nice.”

“Intriguing”

“We really enjoyed when our teachers took turns reading the stories aloud (one would voice and the other would sign, then they would switch off.)”

“It was so much fun acting like a detective throughout the unit.”

“My favorite part was the play.”

“I enjoyed learning new things and telling my parents all about it.”

“I loved reading and listening to the book.”

“The lines in the play were fun to write...some of them made me giggle. I liked how we made it our own.”

“It was fun watching the video of us performing our play.”

“Awesome to read.”

“I felt clever and cunning.”

“It was a lot of fun solving the cases.”

“I liked how the stories were from Dr. Watson’s point of view.”

“The stories made me think.”

“The scavenger hunt was “something fun and different” especially because it involved going outside!”

As one of the recipients of the 2014-2015 Jan Stauber Grant, 45 resources (in print, Braille, audio, and electronic formats) were added to the CSDB library collection; our middle school language arts teachers introduced a new unit in their curriculum; and student interaction between the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind was successfully achieved. This project was the starting point to encourage ongoing interaction between the two schools in the future using the mystery/detective genre.

Required supporting documents attached: Copy of purchasing invoices, play scripts w/photo from performances, Who “Dunnit” Clues – w/photo of Bulldog

## The Case of the Missing Bulldog “Who Dunnit?”



I was looking for the librarian in the Adams building library but she wasn't there. I decided she must be in her other office. (Gottlieb library)

I dropped another clue as I was looking at some delicious houses. (Gingerbread houses in Argo)

On my way back from Holiday Tea and Cookies with Mrs. Hilty, I was distracted by the shiny ornaments. I think I dropped a clue! (Christmas Tree in administration building)

I want to do some reading, good thing I've been practicing my Braille! (Adams library)

Now that you have all the clues, can you figure out where the bulldog is?

The bulldog was hidden in the art building.

Each clue was printed or brailled on a separate clue card and each card had an art supply item attached, such as a paint brush, a crayon, colored pencil, etc. Students had to first find the clue and then reason as to what the attached items had in common.

## The Adventure of the Speckled Band

**Sherlock:** Student 1

**Watson:** Student 2

**The Doc:** Student 3

**Helen:** Student 4

**Julia:** Teacher

**Narrator:** Student 5



**Narrator:** An early morning on Baker Street. The doorbell rings, waking Watson from a peaceful slumber.

*Ding Dong*

*Watson wakes up Sherlock.*

**Watson:** "I am going to brew some coffee, would you like some?"

**Sherlock:** "Yes, I would love some."

*Sherlock answers the door. Watson gets coffee.*

**Narrator:** A young woman dressed in black, with a hunted look on her face, is greeted by Sherlock.

*Sherlock offers her a seat as Watson brings Sherlock coffee.*

**Watson:** Please tell us your story.

**Helen:** I live with my father, Doctor Roylott, whom I call doc. My father wasn't always a crazy man, but after my mother passed away, he became a little odd. He returned from India and started hanging with a group of gypsies, whom he invited to stay in our back yard. My sister, Julia, used to live with us, but right before she was to be married, she passed away. It was an odd situation.

**Narrator:** Flash back.....

**Helen:** Good night, Julia. Try to get some sleep tonight.

**Julia:** It has been so hard for me to sleep. I am so excited to be married soon! Good night, Helen.

**Narrator:** 6 hours later...Helen awakes to the sound of a whistle.

*Whistle*

**Julia:** SCREAMS

*Helen and Julia leave their rooms. Julie stumbles into Helen's arms.*

**Helen:** What happened, Julia?

**Julia:** *(gasps)* The speckled band *(Julia dies)*

**Narrator:** Back in the office

**Sherlock:** Are you sure no one was in the room with her?

**Helen:** I assure you that no one could have possibly gotten in. I am to be married soon and now Dr. Roylott has asked me to move into my sister's room. Last night I heard the same whistle Julia spoke of and that I heard the night of Julia's death. I fear the same fate. I am now here asking for your help.

*Sherlock sits for a moment thinking....*

**Sherlock:** Is there a way that I can get into your place without the Doc knowing?

**Helen:** Yes, he will be gone all day.

**Sherlock:** I will come by this afternoon.

*Helen leaves*

**Sherlock:** What do you think of it, Watson?

**Watson:** It's a dark business.

**Sherlock:** Indeed it is...but we have clues to this dreadful mystery. We know that it happened in Julia's room and her last words were "speckled band." We know that there was a whistle and a clanging sound. We know that gypsies are camping in the back yard. Watson, let's grab a bite... and then I need to gather some more facts.

**Narrator:** Watson and Sherlock eat and then Sherlock heads downtown.

*When Sherlock returns he is carrying blue papers.*

**Sherlock:** Look here Watson, I have seen the will for Doc's wife and she left 1,000 pounds. When the girls get married they each get 250 pounds. If the girls die before marriage, Doc gets the money. Watson, we should head over now. Bring your gun, you might need it."

**Narrator:** Watson and Sherlock get on the train to travel to Helen's house. Arriving, they are greeted by Helen.

**Helen:** I've been waiting for you.

**Sherlock:** Don't worry. We will find out this mystery.

**Narrator:** Sherlock and Watson examine the windows which are locked and Sherlock is unable to get in from the outside. In Julia's room they find a bell pull. Helen informs them that it is not used. Sherlock pulls it and discovers it doesn't ring. In fact, an air vent opens from above connecting Julia's room and her father's. They find a camp bed, a wooden chair, and an iron safe in Doc's room. Holmes notices a small dish of milk on top of the safe.

**Sherlock:** What's in this safe, a cat? Or does your father collect milk cartons, so he has to pour the milk into a saucer on top of the safe?

**Helen:** Oh no, dear Holmes! We don't even have a cat! And he doesn't collect milk cartons! My father probably just left it there when he brought a drink to bed one night. Maybe drinking from a bowl is one of his gypsy customs.

**Sherlock:** Perhaps. And what is this? *He holds up a small leash with a loop on the end.*  
HMMM.

**Narrator:** They go outside, where Sherlock paces back and forth. Finally he turns to Helen.

**Sherlock:** You must do exactly what I say. Your life depends on it!

**Helen:** Okay

**Sherlock:** Watson and I will stay in the inn across the street. Tonight, pretend to go to bed in Julia's room. When you hear your father enter his room next door, signal us by opening your window. Then go back to your old room for the night. Watson and I will spend the night in Julia's room.

**Watson:** And don't let your father know we are here. He mustn't suspect anything!

**Narrator:** the two detectives go across the street to the inn. Night falls, and they see Helen's father come home.

**Doc:** Helen, I'm home. It's almost bedtime, I've had Julia's old room prepared for you.

**Narrator:** two hours later

**Watson:** Holmes, there's the signal, we must go!

**Narrator:** Quietly Sherlock and Watson climb through Julia's bedroom window.

**Sherlock:** Shhh! We cannot make any noise to warn her father. And stay awake, your life may depend on it!

**Narrator:** hours pass

*Three rings of a bell.*

**Narrator:** A light shows through the air vent. Then it goes out and all is quiet....until a soft hiss is heard. Sherlock lights a match and starts pounding on the wall with a cane.

**Sherlock:** (yelling) Do you see it Watson, Do you see it?

**Watson:** Uh, no.

*Whistling sound from offstage.*

**Watson:** What happened, what's going on? I've never seen you look so frightened!

*Doc screams from offstage!*

**Watson:** What the heck was that?

**Sherlock:** It means the case is solved. Come with me Watson, and bring your gun.

**Narrator:** They go into the adjacent bedroom where a strange sight meets their eyes. The safe is open. Helen's father sits in a chair next to the safe, with his dead eyes gazing at the ceiling. The dog leash is in his lap and around his head is a yellow band with brown specks on it.

**Sherlock:** It's the band! The speckled band!

**Watson:** Look it's moving! It's a snake!

**Sherlock:** It's a swamp adder, a deadly snake from India. Let's put it back in the safe where it can harm no one.

*Holmes picks up the leash and loops it over the snake, then carries it to the safe, closing it within. Helen enters.*

**Helen:** My father's dead. (sobs)

**Sherlock:** Better him than you. He was trying to murder you, you know.

**Helen:** *You brute!* (kicks the corpse)

**Watson:** But Holmes, how did you ever figure it out?

**Sherlock:** Elementary, my dear Watson. Once I saw the bell rope everything was obvious. Since it didn't work, it had to be there for a reason, and what better reason than for something to crawl down it. The snake might not bite it's intended victim the first night, but the doc was ready to summon it back with his whistle and try again and again until he succeeded. The doc was so greedy, he did not want either daughter to receive their inheritance. But when I drove the snake out back through the vent, it was so angry it bit him...a fit ending for a killer as cold blooded as the snake he used.

**Watson:** Well, I'll call the police...and the zoo. I imagine they will be the only one interested in keeping the reptile.

**Sherlock:** I can think of no other place for it.

*Fin, all bow*

# The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone



## Characters:

Cops- Student 1, Student 2

Sherlock Holmes- Student 3

Watson- Student 4

Mrs. Hudson- Student 5

Sam Martin- Student 6

The Count- Student 7

## Props:

Dummy (shirt, pants, boots, hat, and balloon head)

Guitar and Case

Revolvers

Curtains

Mazarin Stone

**Setting:**

Sherlock Holmes' Apartment 221 Baker Street

**Script:**

Mrs. Hudson opens the door for Watson

**Watson:** "Has Holmes been out all night?"

**Hudson:** "Yes, and I am so worried about him because he has not eaten for days!"

**Watson:** "What's up with these new curtains?"

**Hudson:** "Holmes had them put up 3 days ago and look at this crazy wax dummy."

**Watson:** "It looks just like Holmes."

Holmes: "Watson don't go near that window"

Watson: "Why?"

Holmes: "Mrs. Hudson, you go now."

Hudson: "Can I cook dinner for you?"

Holmes: "Not tonight."

Watson: "Why did you tell me to stay away from the window?"

Holmes: "There's someone across the street who wants to blow my head off. I would rather have him blow the head off of a dummy than my own. This head is too valuable, don't you think?"

Watson: "Yes, that is true. Tell me more."

Holmes: "This is about the Mazarin Stone. The Mazarin Stone was stolen from the queen. The police cannot find the thieves, so they hired me to investigate. I know Sam Martin and The Count stole the stone. Sam Martin watches me from the window across the street and I think he is planning to blow my head off."

Watson: "Can't you just arrest them?"

**Holmes:** “I do not know where they are keeping the stone. I want to return the stone to the queen.”

**Hudson:** “Somebody wants to see you Mr. Holmes.”

**Holmes:** “Count is here. Go get the police.”

**Watson:** “Are you sure you want me to leave you here with the Count?”

**Holmes:** “Yes, he is dealing with a different animal. I am much more dangerous than him.”

**Watson:** “OK, Holmes. I don’t like this, but I will do it.”

**Holmes:** “Mrs. Hudson, go and get the Count and bring him here.”

**Mrs. Hudson:** “Are you sure you want to risk it?”

**Holmes:** “Do as I say. After letting the Count in, go across the street and invite Sam Martin over to join us as well.”

Holmes goes into his bedroom

Count comes into the room and points his gun at the wax dummy.

**Count:** “Turn around Holmes, you need to see this or else.”

**Holmes:** “You might want to be careful, Count, because I have my gun aimed at you.”

**Count:** “What?”

**Holmes:** “I am glad you like my wax dummy. I had it made just for you. Why are you here?”

**Count:** “I want you to stop having your agents follow me.”

**Holmes:** “Turn in the diamond and I will have my agents stop following you. I have proof that you took it. Where is it?”

**Count:** “If you have proof, why haven’t you arrested me yet?”

**Sam Martin:** “Hey what’s going on here?”

**Holmes:** “You can either return the diamond or go to jail for 20 years. I have my pistol pointed your way. I’m going to give you time to decide what you are going to do. I will be in my room practicing my guitar.”

Holmes goes into his bedroom, shutting the door behind him.

Guitar playing is heard.

**Sam Martin:** “What’s going on here? Do think he really has proof?”

**Count:** “He does have proof, but he won’t arrest us until he has the stone.”

**Sam Martin:** “Do you know if he is listening?”

**Count:** “Don’t you hear that guitar playing? He went into the other room. We need to get the stolen jewel out of the country.”

**Sam Martin:** “Can I see the stone one more time?”

**Count:** “Yes, but come over near the window.”

Count and Sam Martin walk near the window. Count gives the stone to Martin. Holmes stands up and grabs the stone from Martin’s hand.

**Holmes:** “Thank you Count, I will take that. Martin, don’t make me shoot.”

**Sam Martin:** “I thought you were in the other room.”

**Holmes:** “I snuck behind the curtains through another entrance.”

**Sam Martin:** “What was that guitar playing?”

**Holmes:** “That was just a recording of guitar playing.”

**Watson:** “Holmes, are you OK?”

**Holmes:** “I am just fine. Here is Sam Martin, The Count, and the Mazarin Stone. The case has been solved. Policemen take them away.”

**Policeman #1:** “You are under arrest, you have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided to you.”

**Policeman #2:** “Make sure to tell the judge why you stole the Mazarin Stone from the Queen. Make sure you apologize to the queen. Holmes, can you give the stone back to the queen?”

The Policemen leave with Martin and The Count

**Holmes:** “Of course. Watson, please tell Mrs. Hudson I am starving and ready to eat. Would you like to join us for dinner tonight?”

**Watson:** “Of course, I am starving as well.”

