

ЛЕГКО ЧИТАЕМ ПО-АНГЛИЙСКИ

Артур Конан Дойл
ПРИКЛЮЧЕНИЯ
ШЕРЛОКА ХОЛМСА:
ПЛЯШУЩИЕ ЧЕЛОВЕЧКИ

Arthur Conan Doyle
THE ADVENTURE OF
THE DANCING MEN

Адаптация текста, упражнения,
комментарии, словарь
Д. В. Положенцевой



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Иллюстрации *И.В. Кульбицкой*

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Для удобства читателя текст незначительно сокращен и адаптирован, а также содержит комментарии, разные виды упражнений и краткий словарь.

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I

Holmes had been sitting for some hours in silence over a chemical vessel in which he was brewing something very unpleasant. **His head was sunk upon his breast**¹, and he looked from my point of view like a strange, skinny bird.

“So, Watson,” he said, suddenly, “you **are not going to**² invest money in South African **securities**³?”

I was very much surprised. Although I was accustomed to Holmes’s curious abili-

¹ **His head was sunk upon his breast** — его голова была опущена на грудь

² **to be going to do something** — собираться что-либо сделать

³ **securities** — ценные бумаги

ties, this sudden intrusion into my thoughts was rather incomprehensible.

“How on earth¹ do you know that?” I asked in amazement.

He turned his chair, holding a **steaming test-tube²** in his hand. I saw a gleam of amusement in his deep-set eyes.

“Now, Watson, confess, you are confused,” he said.

“I am.”

“I should make you write this on the piece of paper and leave your signature.”³

“Why?”

“Because in five minutes you will say that it is all very simple and obvious.”

“I am sure that I shall say nothing of the kind.”

¹ **How on earth** — каким же образом

² **a steaming test-tube** — дымящаяся пробирка

³ **I should make you write this on the piece of paper and leave your signature.** — Мне следовало бы заставить вас написать об этом на листочке бумаги и подписаться.

“You see, my dear Watson”— he put aside his test-tube and began to lecture like a professor addressing his class —“it is not really difficult to construct a series of conclusions, each dependent on the previous one. And if you simply take away all the central elements and show your audience only the first and the last ones, it will produce an amazing effect. Now, when I noticed **the groove between your left forefinger and thumb**¹, it was not really difficult to understand that you do not want to invest your small capital in the goldfields.”

“I see no connection.”

“Well, I believe you, but I can quickly show you a close connection. Here are the missing links of the very simple chain: 1. You had chalk between your left finger and thumb when you returned from the club last night. 2. You put chalk there for the **cue**²

¹ **the groove between your left forefinger and thumb** — впадинка между большим и указательным пальцами вашей левой руки

² **cue** [kju:] — кий

when you play billiards. 3. You play billiards only with Thurston. 4. You told **me four weeks ago**¹ that Thurston wanted to buy some South African securities and share them with you. 5. Your cheque-book is locked in my table, and you have not asked for the key. 6. You are not going to invest your money in anything.”

“So simple!” I cried.

“Yes, it is!” he said. “Every problem becomes very simple when it is explained to you. But **here you are**², this one is not explained yet. Let’s see what you can say, my friend Watson.” He gave me a sheet of paper and turned to his chemical analysis.

I looked with amazement at the strange symbols on the paper.

“Well, Holmes, it is a child’s drawing,” I said.

“Oh, that’s your idea!”

“What else should it be?”

¹ **four weeks ago** — четыре недели назад

² **here you are** — вот, держите

“That is what Mr. Hilton Cubitt from Norfolk wants to know. He sent us this little puzzle and every minute we expect him. Oh, there’s a ring at the bell, Watson. I am not very much surprised if it is our guest.”

We heard heavy steps on the stairs, and a second later a tall gentleman entered. He had clear eyes and florid cheeks which told us that he led his life far from the fogs of Baker Street. **He seemed to bring**¹ strong, fresh air with him as he entered. He **shook hands with**² each of us and was going to sit down when he noticed the paper with the curious symbols, which I had just examined and left on the table.

“Well, Mr. Holmes, what do you think about it?” he cried. “I heard that you liked strange mysteries, and this one is the strangest, I think! I sent the paper ahead so that you have time to study it before I came.”

¹ **He seemed to bring...** — казалось, он принес...

² **to shake hands with** — пожать руку кому-либо

“Yes, it is very curious,” said Holmes. “**At first sight**¹ one can think that it’s a child’s drawing. It consists of funny little dancing figures. Why do you **pay so much attention to**² such an object?”

“I don’t, Mr. Holmes. But my wife does. **It is frightening her to death**³. She says nothing, but I can see fear in her eyes. That’s why I want to find out the truth.”

Holmes took the paper and turned to the sunlight. It was a page from a note-book. The symbols were done in pencil, and were in this order:—



Holmes examined it for some time, and then folded it carefully and put it in his pocket-book.

¹ **At first sight** — на первый взгляд

² **pay attention to** — уделять внимание чему-либо

³ **It is frightening her to death** — это пугает ее до смерти



“This promises to be a very interesting and unusual case,” he said. “You gave me a few details in your letter, Mr. Hilton Cubitt, but I would be very grateful if you tell the story again, for my friend, Dr. Watson.”

“I’m not good at telling stories,” said our visitor. He was rather nervous. “Just ask questions if something is unclear. I’ll begin with my marriage last year; but I want to say first of all, that although I’m not a rich man, my family has been at Ridling Thorpe for five centuries and it is well-known in the County of Norfolk. Last year I came to London and stayed at a **boarding-house**¹ in Russell Square. There was an American young lady there... Elsie Patrick. Somehow we became friends, until I **fell in love with**² her. We got married quietly and returned to Norfolk as a couple. You’ll think it is very

¹ **boarding-house** — пансион

² **to fall in love with somebody** — влюбиться в кого-либо

mad, Mr. Holmes, that a man of a good old family could marry a woman like this, knowing nothing of her past or of her family. But if you saw her and knew her it would help you to understand.”

“Elsie was very straight-forward. She gave me an opportunity to think it over and cancel the wedding if I wanted to do so. ‘I have had something very unpleasant in my life,’ she said; ‘I want to forget all about it, because it is very painful to me. If you marry me, Hilton, you will marry a woman who did nothing wrong. But you will have to believe me and to allow me to be silent about my past to the time when I became yours. If these conditions are too difficult to accept, then leave me and go back to Norfolk. And I’ll lead my lonely life here, where you found me.’ It was the day before our wedding. I told her that I agreed with her conditions, and I keep my word.”

“Well, we have been happily married already for a year. But about a month ago, at the end of June, I saw some signs of trouble for the first time. One day my wife received a letter from America. I saw the American stamp. She **turned white**¹, read the letter and threw it into the fire. She didn’t tell me anything, and I didn’t say a word, because a promise is a promise; but from that moment she has always been uneasy. There is always a look of fear on her face... a look as if she is expecting something. If only she trusted me — she would see that I was her best friend. But if she doesn’t speak, I can say nothing. She is an honest woman, Mr. Holmes, and whatever trouble have been in her past life it is not her fault. I am only a simple Norfolk squire, but there is no one in England who values his family honour more than I do. She knows it well, and she knew

¹ **to turn white** — побледнеть

it well before she married me. She will never leave any stain on it... I am sure.”

“Well, now I come to the strange part of my story. About a week ago... it was the Tuesday of last week... I found on one of the **windowsills**¹ some little dancing figures, like these on the paper. They were written with chalk. I thought that it was the **stable-boy**² who had drawn them, but he swore he knew nothing about it. Anyway, they had appeared there during the night. I had them washed out and mentioned the matter to my wife afterwards. To my surprise **she took it very seriously**³, and asked me, if any more figures appeared, to let her see them. And yesterday morning I found this paper on the sun-dial in the garden. I showed it to Elsie, and she fainted. Since then her eyes have

¹ **windowsill** — подоконник

² **stable-boy** — помощник конюха

³ **she took it very seriously** — она восприняла это очень серьезно