

Comparison of lamb to the slaughter and the adventure of the speckled band detect...

[Experience](#), [Laughter](#)



A detective, a crime, a victim, a culprit/criminal, a suspect, a witness, mystery, suspense, clues, evidence, interviews, alibis and a twist. These are all the things good detective story will include. To compare two detective stories and see how they differ, you need to know that that they have these things in common. Both of my two chosen detective stories have these qualities, and in this essay, I will be trying to find out how and why they are different.

'Lamb to the Slaughter' by Roald Dahl is a very ironic and deceiving title. It gives the impression of something sweet and innocent - like a lamb, being killed or sacrificed. The beginning of the story will make you continue to think this. The title is also a bit mysterious because even though we have an idea of what it mean, we are not sure, and it is very vague. It only becomes apparent when you have read some of the story that the title is referring to the murder weapon - a frozen leg of lamb. 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, however, isn't as mysterious, because later on in the story it can be used as a clue to help solve the crime.

This title does play tricks though, because whenever you read about something speckled, you think that this must be what you are looking for. At first, I did this with the cheetah, and the Gypsies speckled bandanas. I think that Roald Dahl's title is smarter as it is mysterious and has two meanings, where as Conan Doyle's title is just a summary of the story. The beginning of 'Lamb to the Slaughter' tells us about Mary Maloney and her home. It all seems very warm and cosy, and you also get the impression that Mrs Maloney is very much in love with her husband. Now and again she would

glance up at the clock, but without anxiety, merely to please herself with the thought that each minute gone by made it nearer to the time he would come.

” Not exactly what you would expect a murderer to do. Mary Maloney’s appearance is not described as the typical criminal’s either. “ Her skin – for this was her six month with child – had acquired a wonderful translucent quality, the mouth was soft, and the eyes, with their new placid look, seemed larger, darker than before. From reading this, you get the impression that Mary Maloney is the ‘ lamb’ who is going to be killed. But if you didn’t know that you were reading a detective story, you would not have guessed. ‘ The Adventure of the Speckled Band’ however, lets you know from the very beginning that it is a detective story.

It introduces the main characters almost straight away, and tells you what has happened in the first two pages. Unlike ‘ Lamb to the Slaughter’ the characters physical appearances are not described. The only thing that you learn about the main characters is that they like to sleep in late. He was a late riser, as a rule, and as the clock on the mantle-piece showed me that it was only a quarter-past seven, I blinked at him in some surprise..

. ” Could this odd start be the beginning of an odd case for Sherlock and Watson? The plot of ‘ The Adventure of the Speckled Band’ is, in my opinion, a lot stronger than the plot of ‘ Lamb to the Slaughter. ‘ It gives you more background, explains in detail what has happened and why, and it tells us

what the real reason behind the crime was. Therefore, if he killed them, he would still receive this income.

We do not know exactly why Mary Maloney killed her husband, however, and all we know is that he had some sort of bad news, and maybe she got angry/jealous. Patrick Maloney's murder was unplanned and spur-of-the-moment. Dr Grimesby Roylett had obviously thought a lot about how he was going to carry out the crime, and he knew exactly what the outcome would be - The death of his victim. There was no way that Mary Maloney knew that her husband would die in 'Lamb to the Slaughter'. The methods of detection are tremendously different in the two stories. In 'Adventure of the Speckled Band,' Sherlock Holmes listens and takes in everything that Helen Stoner is saying.

He asks a lot of questions, even ones that you would not have thought mattered. He even asks "Is it your custom to always lock yourselves in at night...

why?" He also asks, "Was your sister dressed?" Why should the questions be relevant in trying to find Julia Stoner's killer? In 'Lamb to the Slaughter' the detectives only ask the obvious questions - Questions that come almost instinctively. It becomes quite clear that Sherlock Holmes 'digs deeper' and takes his cases a lot more personally than the detectives in 'Lamb to the Slaughter'. 'Sherlock Holmes does, however, have more clues. The bell pull that doesn't work, the ventilator that goes from one room to the other, the

dog lash, the clanging of the metal, the whistling and the saucer of milk all help Sherlock Holmes solve the crime.

The police detectives only have Patrick Maloney's dead body as a clue and evidence. The time period that the stories are set in is probably the reason why the methods of detection are so different. 'Lamb to the Slaughter' is obviously quite recent as Mary Maloney heard "tyres on the gravel outside and the car door slamming..." Because the police could rely on autopsies/post-mortems and forensic medicine, the detectives do not need to figure out who the killer is - They could get the scientists to do it for them.

Sherlock Holmes didn't have much technology as he was from the Nineteenth Century. We know this as he refers to Helen Stoner being in a dogcart - A two wheeled horse drawn vehicle. Also, the clothes that Helen Stoner is wearing are not from modern times. She raised her veil as she spoke.

.. " and " ..

. Holmes pushed back the frill of black lace which fringed the hand...

" There were no lights or household electricity either. " In her right hand was found the charred stump of a match, and in her left, a match-box...

Showing that she had struck a light and looked about her. " If this story had been set in the present day, Julia Stoner would have simply flicked on a light switch to see what was happening. Because of the lack of technology, Sherlock Holmes would have had to do a considerable amount more thinking

and research. The written style also shows how contrasted the two time periods are.

'The Adventure of the Speckled Band' has a lot longer sentences. "On glancing over my notes of the seventy odd cases in which I have during the last eight years studied the methods of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I find many tragic, some comic, a large number merely strange, but none commonplace; for, working as he did rather for the love of his art than the acquirement of wealth, he refused to associate himself with any investigation which did not tend towards the unusual, and even the fantastic. The words that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle uses are also a lot longer and on a higher reading level. It is written in first person - Conan Doyle has made it seem as if Watson has narrated the story. 'Lamb to the Slaughter' is quite easy reading, and has shorter, sharper sentences.

"Mary Maloney was waiting for her husband to come home from work" and "She took his coat and hung it in the closet." They only tell you what is necessary, and they don't get sidetracked or 'waffle'. It is written in third person, so you get an outside view instead of a personal one. 'Lamb to the Slaughter' lets you know everything that is happening, and tells you who the killer is and what she is going to do about her situation. 'Adventure of the Speckled Band' however, keeps you guessing, and that is why there are so many clues. The author wants the readers to try and work it out for themselves.

Suspense is very important in detective stories. In 'Lamb to the Slaughter' suspense is created when Patrick Maloney comes in from work. He sits down and drinks his whisky- over half a glass in one gulp. Mary Maloney “.

.. heard the ice cubes falling back against the bottom of the empty glass..

. ” This isn't essential information, but it creates suspense and tension.

Suspense is also created in 'Lamb to the Slaughter' at the end. When Mary Maloney tries to get the police to eat the lamb, you just want to know if the policemen will realise why she is so adamant that they eat it. We know that if the lamb is eaten, Mary Maloney will be free and get away with the crime. In 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band,' suspense is created when Sherlock Holmes and Watson are in Helen Stoner's bedroom waiting for Dr Roylett to strike.

At this point in the story, we don't know what the killer is, and so the readers are eagerly anticipating Dr Roylett to start the whole murdering process.

There is a twist in the end of 'Adventure of the Speckled Band.' We are expecting Helen Stoner to be the next victim, and so it is quite shocking when we find out that Dr Roylett has just died. When the snake has been thrown in to the safe, and the 'story' part has finished, it goes back to Watson just rounding up the events, as he was doing in the very beginning of the story.

The ending of 'Lamb to the Slaughter' is when the police detectives are eating the leg of lamb. The last sentence is very effective, as we have not seen this side of Mary Maloney in the story before. “ And in the other room,

Mary Maloney began to giggle. " From this, we know that Mary Maloney will get away with the murder, and that she is obviously pleased with herself.