

How to make an effective detective story essay sample



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To write a good effective detective story, the story must include these good elements: an interesting plot, a good structure, description of the characters and some strange settings. After reading five detective stories: "The Speckled Band" by Arthur Conan Doyle, "They Can Only Hang You Once" by Dashiell Hammett, "The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb" by Agatha Christie, "Murder At St Oswald's" by Michael Underwood and "The Cross of Lorraine" by Isaac Asimov, I found some good elements that the authors chose. So, in this essay, I will show that how the elements will make the story good or bad.

Plot is the main part of creating a good detective story. A plot is the procedures of events of the story. It can make the story effective if you have a surprising ending in the story like in "Murder in St Oswald's", firstly, a murder in a school is not usual, secondly, Michael Underwood, the author, lead you to a wrong direction in the story, when the readers is hardly imagining how a group of students to plan how to kill an unpopular teacher and finally the teacher didn't die but he's actually the murderer and he killed his wife.

Also the story needs the readers to work out the case. "The Speckled Band" has a very classic plot because it likes some other detective stories, there's a character finding out the murderer, and keeping a sense of scare. The words that Arthur Conan used can let you guess what's going on. A good structure is also very important. Structure usually contains 4 parts: incident, investigation, revelation and explanation. The size of each part should not be same, incident and explanation should carry the least size of them;

investigation carrying the most. If there is no structure, readers can't clearly get the information from the story.

Let's use "The Speckled Band" again as an example, Arthur Conan Doyle wrote it with the 4 parts structure. In the story, he is showing the details of the case, how Holmes worked out, and the final truth. Readers can absorb the information of the case much more easily, but they can't work it out themselves and lose the fun of reading detective stories. But in the story "Murder in St Oswald's", you can feel more exciting, because in the story, the reader can also be one of the characters inside the story to work the case out by yourself.

Also in the story, you can see that there's no the part of incident in the front of the story, but we can't say it has a bad structure but we can say it's unusual, and both of them also makes the story effective. How the author creates and describes a character is another element to make the detective story effective, like creating the character with a lot of details and making him very smart and like in 'The Speckled Band'. In the story "They can only hang you once", the conversation of Sam Spade asking the people in the house like the '... so she says... so he says' part make the readers a feel of lying between some of them.

Also in "The Speckled Band", "... we could see that she was indeed in a pitiable state of agitation, her face all drawn and grey, with restless frightened eyes like those of some hunted animal..." the author gave readers a frightening sense by describing her face and how she felt when she went into Holmes. Settings are how the author decrypts the place and

the surrounding to create a strange atmosphere. Like in 'The Speckled Band', the author described the room very detail. Like "It was a homely little room, with a low ceiling and gaping fireplace, after the fashion of old country house.

A brown chest of drawers stood in one corner, a narrow white-counter paned bed in another and a dressing -table on the left-hand side of the window. These articles, with two small wickerwork chairs, made up all the furniture in the room, save for a square of Wilton carpet in the centre. The boards round and the paneling of the walls were brown, worm-eaten oak, so old and discolored that it may have dated from the original building of the house. ', it makes readers feel that they are in the house because the settings of the room is very detail, and reader can easily imagine the room.

And also in 'They can only hang you once', "Though an open door he could see an old man in white pyjamas lying sprawled across a rumpled bed. His head, a shoulder, an arm angled over the edge of the bed. His other hand held his throat tightly..." it's also describing the room but it's not as good as the "The speckled band" one. In conclusion, I think all of those four elements (an interesting plot, a good structure, interesting characters and strange settings) of writing an effective detective story are very important, if you know how to use those four elements popularly, you must be able to write a good detective story and be a good writer!