

ЛЕГКО ЧИТАЕМ
ПО-АНГЛИЙСКИ

2
УРОВЕНЬ



Arthur Conan Doyle
THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE

А. К. Дойл
ПРИКЛЮЧЕНИЯ ШЕРЛОКА ХОЛМСА:
СОЮЗ РЫЖИХ

словарь • комментарий • упражнения

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Холмса: Союз Рыжих /
The Red-Headed League
Серия «Легко читаем по-английски»

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=9998126

*Артур Конан-Дойл / Arthur Conan Doyle. Приключения Шерлока Холмса. Союз Рыжих / The Red-Headed League: АСТ; Москва; 2014
ISBN 978-5-17-082431-1*

Аннотация

«Союз рыжих» – один из наиболее известных рассказов А. К. Дойла из сборника «Приключения Шерлока Холмса», опубликованный в 1891 году. Текст произведения незначительно сокращен и упрощен. Книга также содержит упражнения, комментарии и словарь.

Предназначается для продолжающих изучать английский язык (уровень 2 – Pre-Intermediate).

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Приключения Шерлока
Холмса: Союз Рыжих /
The Red-Headed League
Адаптация текста,
комментарий, упражнения
и словарь О. Глушиенковой**

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I

I called on my friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, one day in the autumn of last year and found him speaking to an elderly gentleman with fiery red hair.

“You could not have come at a better time,¹ my dear Watson,” Holmes said.

“I was afraid that you were engaged.”

“So I am.”

“Then I can wait in the next room.”

“Not at all. This gentleman, Mr. Wilson, has been my partner and helper in many of my most successful cases, and I have no doubt that he will be of use to me in yours also.”

The gentleman half rose from his chair and nodded.

“I know, my dear Watson, that you share my love of all that is outside the routine of everyday life. You have shown it by the enthusiasm with which you chronicled so many of my adventures,” said Holmes.

“Your cases have been of the greatest interest to me,” I observed.

“Now, Mr. Jabez Wilson here has been good enough to call upon me this morning and go begin a story which promises to be one of the most unusual which I have listened to for some time.

¹ **You could not have come at a better time** – Вы пришли как нельзя более кстати

As far as I have heard, it is impossible for me to say whether this case is an example of crime or not, but events are certainly very unusual. Perhaps, Mr. Wilson, you would repeat your story. I ask you not only because my friend, Dr. Watson, has not heard the beginning but also because your story makes me anxious to hear every detail. As a rule, when I have heard some story, I am able to think of the thousands of other similar cases. But not now.”

The client, looking a little proud, took a newspaper from the pocket of his coat. As he glanced down the advertisement column, I took a good look at the man and tried, like my companion, to read what his dress or appearance could tell me.

I did not learn very much, however. Our visitor looked like a common British tradesman. There was nothing remarkable about the man except his blazing red head.

Sherlock Holmes saw my glances. “Except the facts that he has at some time worked with his hands, that he is a Freemason, that he has been in China, and that he has done a lot of writing lately, I can deduce nothing else.”

“How did you know all that, Mr. Holmes?” Mr. Jabez Wilson asked. “How did you know, for example, that I worked with my hands? It’s true, for I began as a carpenter.”

“Your hands, my dear sir. Your right hand is much larger than your left. You have worked with it, and the muscles are more developed.”

“Well, and the Freemasonry?”

“I won’t tell you how I read that, especially as, **rather against**

the strict rules of your order, you use an arc-and-compass breastpin.²

“Ah, of course, I forgot that. But the writing?”

“Your right cuff is so shiny, and the left one has a patch near the elbow where you put it on the desk.”

“Well, but China?”

“The fish that you have tattooed on your hand could only be done in China. I have made a small study of tattoos.”

Mr. Jabez Wilson laughed. **“Well, I never!³”** said he. “I thought at first that you had done something clever, but I see that there was nothing in it, after all.”

“I begin to think, Watson,” said Holmes, “that I make a mistake in explaining. Can you not find the advertisement, Mr. Wilson?”

“Yes, I have got it now,” he answered. “Here it is. This is what began it all. You just read it for yourself, sir.”

I took the paper from him and read as follows.

TO THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE: On account of the bequest of the late Ezekiah Hopkins, of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, U. S. A.,⁴ there is now another vacancy open for

² **rather against the strict rules of your order, you use an arc-and-compass breastpin** – вопреки строгим правилам своего ордена, вы носите булавку с изображением дуги и окружности (*дуга и окружность – знаки масонов; в прежние времена они были тайными, но сейчас многие масоны в нарушение старинного устава носят различные предметы с их изображением*)

³ **Well, I never!** – Ни за что б не догадался!

⁴ **On account of the bequest of the late Ezekiah Hopkins, of Lebanon,**

a member of the League with a salary of 4 pounds a week. All red-headed men who are above the age of twenty-one years, are eligible. Apply on Monday, at eleven o'clock, to Duncan Ross, at the offices of the League, 7, Fleet Street.

“What does this mean?” I exclaimed after I had twice read the advertisement.

“And now, Mr. Wilson, tell us all about yourself, your household, and the effect which this advertisement had on your life. Make a note, Doctor, of the paper and the date.”

“It is *The Morning Chronicle* of April 27, 1890. Just two months ago.”

“Very good. Now, Mr. Wilson?”

“Well, it is just as I told you, Mr. Sherlock Holmes,” said Jabez Wilson; “I have a small pawnbroker’s business at Coburg Square, near the City. It’s not very large, and it has just given me a living. I used to be able to keep two assistants, but now I keep one; and I can do it only because he agrees to work for half wages to learn the business.”

“What is the name of this young man?” asked Sherlock Holmes.

“His name is Vincent Spaulding, and he’s not very young. It’s hard to say his age. I do not wish a better assistant, Mr. Holmes; and I know very well that he could earn twice what I am able to give him. But, after all, if he is satisfied, **why should I put**

ideas in his head?⁵

“Why, indeed? You seem most lucky to have an assistant for half wages. Your assistant is as remarkable as your advertisement.”

“Oh, he has his faults, too,” said Mr. Wilson. “He is very much interested in photography. He slips away with a camera when he ought to be working, and then dives down into the cellar like a rabbit into its hole to develop his pictures. That is his main fault, but he’s a good worker.”

“He is still with you, I presume?”

“Yes, sir. He and a girl of fourteen, who does simple cooking and keeps the place clean – that’s all I have in the house, for I am a widower. We live very quietly, sir, the three of us.

“Spaulding, he came into the office eight weeks ago, with this paper in his hand and said:

“I wish, Mr. Wilson, that I was a red-headed man.”

“Why?” I asked.

“Here’s a vacancy on the League of the Red-headed Men,” said he. ‘It’s worth a little fortune to any man who gets it, and I understand that there are more vacancies than there are men.’

“Why, what is it?” I asked. You see, Mr. Holmes, I am a very stay-at-home man, and, **as my business came to me instead of my going to it,**⁶ I often stayed in for several weeks. So I didn’t

⁵ **why should I put ideas in his head?** – зачем я стану внушать ему вредные для меня идеи?

⁶ **as my business came to me instead of my having to go to it** – так как мой

know much of what was going on outside, and I was always glad of any news.

“Have you never heard of the League of the Red-headed Men?” he asked with his eyes open.

“Never.”

“Why, how strange, for you are eligible yourself for one of the vacancies.”

“And what are they worth?” I asked.

“Oh, a couple of hundred a year, but the work is easy, and you can do some other work at the same time.”

“Well, the business has not been very good for some years, and an extra couple of hundred would be very handy.

“Tell me all about it,” said I.

“Well,” said he, showing me the advertisement, ‘you can see for yourself that the League has a vacancy, and there is the address where you can apply. As far as I know, the League was founded by an American millionaire, Ezekiah Hopkins. He was himself red-headed, and he had a great sympathy for all red-headed men; so when he died it was found that he had left his enormous fortune with instructions to help men whose hair is of that colour. From all I hear it is good pay, and very little to do.’

“But,” said I, ‘there are millions of red-headed men who can apply.’

“Not so many as you think,” he answered. ‘They must be Londoners, and grown men. This American started from London

when he was young. Then I have heard it is no use your applying if your hair is light red, or dark red, or anything but real bright, blazing, fiery red.’

“Now, it is a fact, gentlemen, as you may see for yourselves, that my hair is of that very colour, so it seemed to me that if there was any competition I had a good chance. Vincent Spaulding seemed to know so much about it that I ordered him to come with me. So we shut the business up and started off for the address that was given us in the advertisement.

“I never hope to see anything like that again, Mr. Holmes. From north, south, east, and west every man who had a shade of red in his hair had come to answer the advertisement. Fleet Street was crowded with red-headed men. I had not thought there were so many in the whole country as were brought together by that advertisement. Every shade of red they were; but, as Spaulding said, there were not many who had the real blazing red. When I saw how many were waiting, I was in despair; but Spaulding got me through the crowd, and up to the steps which led to the office, and soon we found ourselves in the office.

“There was nothing in the office but a couple of wooden chairs and a table, behind which sat a small man with a head that was even redder than mine. He said a few words to each candidate as he came up, and then **he always found some fault in them which would disqualify them.**⁷ Getting a vacancy did not seem

⁷ **he always found some fault in them which would disqualify them** – в каждом он обязательно находил какой-то недостаток, который делал его неподходящим

to be such an easy matter, after all. However, when our turn came the little man was much more favourable to me than to any of the others, and he closed the door as we entered, so that he might speak in private with us.

“‘This is Mr. Jabez Wilson,’ said my assistant, ‘and he wishes to fill a vacancy in the League.’

“‘And he suits us,’ the other answered. ‘I do not remember when I saw anything so fine.’ He took a step backward, and looked at my hair. Then suddenly he ran forward, shook my hand, and congratulated me warmly on my success.

“‘I am sure, you will excuse me for taking a precaution.’ With those words he seized my hair in both his hands, and pulled until I cried with pain. ‘I think that all is as it should be. But we have to be careful, for we have twice been deceived by wigs and once by paint,’ said he as he released me. He went to the window and shouted at the top of his voice that the vacancy was filled.

“‘My name,’ said he, ‘is Mr. Duncan Ross. Are you a married man, Mr. Wilson? Have you a family?’

“I answered that I had not.

“His face fell.

“**‘Dear me!’**⁸ he said, ‘that is very serious indeed! I am sorry to hear you say that. The league was founded for the propagation of the red-headed men. It is very bad that you are a bachelor.’

“My face fell at this, Mr. Holmes, for I thought that I would not have the vacancy after all; but after thinking it over for a few

⁸ **Dear me!** – Боже мой!

minutes he said that it would be all right.

“We cannot lose a man with such a head of hair as yours. When will you be able to start work?” said he.

“Well, I have a business already,” said I.

“Oh, **never mind about that**,⁹ Mr. Wilson!” said Vincent Spaulding. ‘I am able to look after that for you.’

“What will be the working hours?” I asked.

“Ten to two.’

“A pawnbroker’s business is mostly done in the evening, Mr. Holmes, especially Thursday and Friday evening, which is just before pay-day; so it suited me very well to earn a little in the mornings. Besides, I knew that my assistant was a good man, and that he would see to anything that turned up.

“That will suit me very well,’ said I. ‘And the pay?’

“It is 4 pounds a week.’

“And the work?’

“Very simple.’

“What do you call very simple?’

“Well, you have to be in the office the whole time. If you leave, you will lose your position.’

“It’s only four hours a day, and I shall not leave,’ said I.

“Neither sickness, nor business, nor anything else will excuse you,’ said Mr. Duncan Ross; ‘you must stay there, or you lose your position.’

“And the work?’

⁹ **never mind about that** – не беспокойтесь об этом

“You are to copy out the Encyclopaedia Britannica. You must find your ink, pens, and paper, but we give you this table and chair. Will you be ready tomorrow?”

“Certainly,’ I answered.

“Then, good-bye, Mr. Jabez Wilson, and let me congratulate you once more on the important position which you have received.’ He showed me out of the room and I went home with my assistant. I was so pleased at my good fortune.”

Exercises

1. Answer the questions:

1. What client called on Sherlock Holmes one day? What did he look like?
2. What did Sherlock Holmes tell Dr. Watson about Mr. Wilson's case?
3. What did Sherlock Holmes guess about Mr. Wilson? What details helped him? Was Mr. Wilson impressed? Why (not)?
4. What did Mr. Wilson tell Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson about his business and household?
5. What did you learn about Mr. Wilson's assistant?
6. How did Mr. Wilson learn about a vacancy on the Red-headed League?
7. Was Mr. Wilson enthusiastic about the vacancy? Why (not)?
8. Why did Mr. Wilson go to Fleet Street in the end?
9. Why did he take his assistant with him?
10. What did Mr. Wilson see in Fleet Street and in the office of the Red-headed League?
11. Whom did Mr. Wilson meet in the office? Did Mr. Ross employ him at once?
12. What was the work like?

2. Think and say if these statements are right or wrong.

Correct the wrong ones, give your reasons.

1. Vincent Spaulding agreed to work for Mr. Wilson for half the wages to learn the business.
2. An American millionaire Ezekiah Hopkins left his enormous fortune to help and propagate red-headed men in London.
3. Mr. Wilson was sure that the whole affair of the Red-Headed League was a fraud and wanted Sherlock Holmes to explain to him what it was all about.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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