



MARK FOR REVIEW?



YES



NO

Excerpt from  
***The 39 Steps*** by John Buchan  
Published in 1915

I had a solemn time traveling north that day. It was fine May weather, with the hawthorn flowering on every hedge, and I asked myself why, when I was still a free man, I had stayed on in London and not got the good of this heavenly country. I didn't dare face the restaurant car, but I got a luncheon-basket at Leeds and shared it with the... woman. Also, I got the morning's papers, with news about starters for the Derby and the beginning of the cricket season, and some paragraphs about how Balkan affairs were settling down and a British squadron was going to Kiel.

When I had done with them, I got out Scudder's little black pocket-book and studied it. It was pretty well filled with jottings, chiefly figures, though now and then a name was printed in. For example, I found the words 'Hofgaard,' 'Luneville,' and 'Avocado' pretty often, and especially the word 'Pavia.'

Now I was certain that Scudder never did anything without a reason, and I was pretty sure that there was a cipher in all this. That is a subject which has always interested me, and I did a bit at it myself once as intelligence officer at Delagoa Bay during the Boer War. I have a head for things like chess and puzzles, and I used to reckon myself pretty good at finding out ciphers. This one looked like the numerical kind where sets of figures correspond to the letters of the alphabet, but any fairly shrewd man can find the clue to that sort after an hour or two's work, and I didn't think Scudder would have been content with anything so easy. So I fastened on the printed words, for you can make a pretty good numerical cipher if you have a key word which gives you the sequence of the letters.

I tried for hours, but none of the words answered. Then I fell asleep and woke at Dumfries just in time to bundle out and get into the slow Galloway train. There was a man on the platform whose looks I didn't like, but he never glanced at me, and when I caught sight of myself in the mirror of an automatic machine I didn't wonder.

About five o'clock the carriage had emptied, and I was left alone as I had hoped. I got out at the next station, a little place whose name I scarcely noted, set right in the heart of a bog. It reminded me of one of those forgotten little stations in the Karroo. An old station-master was digging in his garden, and with his spade over his shoulder sauntered to the train, took charge of a parcel, and went back to his potatoes. A child of ten received my ticket, and I emerged on a white road that straggled over the brown moor.

It was a gorgeous spring evening, with every hill showing as clear as a cut amethyst. The air had the [odd], rooty smell of bogs, but it was as fresh as mid-ocean, and it had the strangest effect on my spirits. I actually felt light-hearted. I might have been a boy out for a spring holiday tramp, instead of a man of thirty-seven very much wanted by the police. I felt just as I used to feel when I was starting for a big trek on a frosty morning on the high veld. If you believe me, I swung along that road whistling. There was no plan of campaign in my head, only just to go on and on in this blessed, honest-smelling hill country, for every mile put me in better humor with myself.



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Based on evidence in the excerpt Scudder, the character whom the narrator mentions, is **most likely** which of the following?

- A. a secret agent
- B. a police officer
- C. a professional writer
- D. a relative of the narrator

**CSO: RLA.O. 10.1.06 – DOK: 2**

Students will create supportable predictions, generalizations, opinions, inferences and conclusions based upon an analysis of textual information.

**Rationale:**

**A: Correct Response:** The reference to Scudder's book containing "a cipher" and the narrator's mentioning that he himself had worked in intelligence suggests that Scudder is/was a spy.

**B:** There is no evidence Scudder is a police officer.

**C:** The narrator refers to "Scudder's little black pocket-book," and his statement that the book is "well filled with jottings, chiefly figures," suggests the book was a personal notebook rather a published book. Also, even if it were a published book there is no evidence the book was authored by Scudder.

**D:** There is no evidence Scudder is a relative of the narrator.



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Which of these **best** describes the tone of the passage as it relates to the main character from *The 39 Steps* by John Buchan?

- A. The tone of the passage is sad because the main character is traveling alone.
- B. The tone of the passage is exciting because the main character is having an adventure.
- C. The tone of the passage is mysterious because of the suspense surrounding the main character.
- D. The tone of the passage is romantic because the main character finds the country settings to be beautiful.

**CSO: RLA.O.10.1.08 – DOK: 3**

Students will interpret and explain the relationships of the literary elements (e.g., setting, plot, point of view, theme, conflict, characterization, voice, tone, mood) within specific genres.

**Rationale:**

**A:** Although the word “solemn” appears in the first sentence, the overall tone is not one of sadness and there is no evidence the main character dislikes traveling alone.

**B:** While a man escaping the police could be seen as an adventure, it is a negative, enervating adventure for the main character, not an exciting one.

**C:** Correct Response: The references to ciphering, the unidentified woman, the stranger at the train station, and the narrator being wanted by the police all add to the mysterious tone of the passage.

**D:** Though the main character seems to love the country and one can assume he feels it is beautiful, there is no evidence he equates beauty with romance.