

Task: describe the cause of the main conflict. Give examples from the text. Show how the setting impacted on the action in the story. Give examples from the text. Student name withheld.

Buchan, J 1993, *The-Thirty-Nine Steps*, Wordsworth Editions Limited, Hertfordshire.

The Thirty-Nine Steps

Main Conflict

The main conflict in this story surrounds Richard Hannay who is chased by the murderers of Mr. Scudder, his American neighbor and his own country's police who believe he is the murderer. In *The Thirty-Nine Steps* by John Buchan, Richard Hannay becomes entangled with international spies and a German plot to steal the British military secrets. He is extremely bored with life in London and is thinking about moving on when he meets his upstairs neighbor and is told about the German assassination plans and the international spies who are trying to prevent it. After hearing the story from his new friend Mr. Scudder, Richard decides that he is going to stop the assassination happening on the 15th of June.

One evening when Richard returns to his London flat room, he finds the spy on the floor stabbed through the heart and realizes that he is now linked to this crime. The murderers are now chasing him because they know that he has information about the planned assassination. With one man dead in his own flat and the murderers after him, Richard decides to flee to Scotland until the 15th of June and try to prevent the death of another innocent man.

The Setting

The setting of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* is London and mostly Scotland. The historic setting is just before World War 1 which is effective because the events in the novel actually took place during that time. The setting moves to Scotland which I think is a splendid idea because the main character Richard Hannay is a Scottish person and that makes the story more realistic. In Scotland he tries to escape from people following him and he travels around the country in all kinds of ways. It is more or less a wild-goose chase because he is traveling everywhere, pretending to be other people at different places at different times everyday, which makes it even harder for the police and the murderers to locate him. This country setting impacts on the action of the story and makes it more interesting and action-packed to read.

