

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Final Problem and Other Stories



Audio CD



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

THE FINAL PROBLEM AND OTHER STORIES

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These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the passages



linked to the listening activities.



Sir Arthur *Conan Doyle*

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1859. He was the second son in a family of ten children. When he was nine years old, his uncles paid for him to study at a school in England. He later returned to Edinburgh to study medicine.

One of Conan Doyle's first jobs was as a doctor on ships and he travelled to the Arctic and Africa. After he returned to England, he opened his own doctor's surgery¹ in Southsea, near Portsmouth. He used the time that he spent waiting for his patients to start writing his first stories. Eventually, Conan Doyle stories were so successful that he became a full time author.

In 1885, Conan Doyle married Louise Hawkins, the sister of one of his patients. They had two children. Sadly, Louise died of an illness called tuberculosis in 1906. Later, Conan Doyle married again and had three children with his second wife, Jean Elizabeth Leckie.

Today Conan Doyle is probably best known for the Sherlock Holmes stories. The character of Sherlock Holmes was very similar to Conan Doyle's old professor, Joseph Bell. The professor once showed the class how to give an explanation for a patient's illness by using 'clues'² similar to those used by a detective and by observing a patient's everyday life and, for example, their job and past history.

1. **surgery** : the place where a patient goes to see a doctor.
2. **clues** : things to help you solve a problem.

Holmes and his assistant, Dr Watson, first appeared in *A Study in Scarlet* in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, a popular Victorian magazine with stories, sold before Christmas each year. This was followed by a Sherlock Holmes novel, *The Sign of Four*, in 1890. Conan Doyle also wrote a series of short stories for a monthly magazine, *The Strand*. The stories were so successful that Conan Doyle found it difficult to be recognised for the other books he wrote. In 1893, he decided to end the series when he wrote *The Adventure of the Final Problem*, but when more than 20,000 readers stopped reading *The Strand* magazine, Conan Doyle finally wrote another story, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. (This was written as if the story happened earlier than *The Adventure of the Final Problem*.) In a further collection of stories, beginning with *The Adventure of the Empty House*, Conan Doyle describes how Holmes escaped alive from his previous meeting with his rival, Professor Moriarty.

Conan Doyle is also the author of the fantasy novel *The Lost World* (1912). In *The Lost World*, the imposing³ Professor Challenger goes on an adventure to South America and finds that dinosaurs are still living there. Professor Challenger was also based on a professor at Edinburgh University, William Rutherford.

Conan Doyle was given the title 'sir' for his work in a hospital during the Boer War in South Africa. Later he became very interested in life after death and unusual experiences. He spent a lot of time researching, just like he did in all his work, and he even wrote a book to try to prove that fairies⁴ exist. This seems unusual for a man who used logic and rational thought in many of the things he did, but it is thought that the death of his first wife Louise and his father was a possible reason for his interest in these subjects.

3. **imposing** : looking important and big in appearance.

4. **fairies** : small imaginary beings of human form that have magical powers. They are often represented as small people with wings.



1 Comprehension check

Match the sentences (1-6) with the endings (A-F). Number the sentences in the order you read about them in the text.

- 1 The character of Professor Challenger first appears
- 2 Conan Doyle married twice,
- 3 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh,
- 4 He wrote a popular series of Sherlock Holmes stories
- 5 His interest in life after death
- 6 He first started writing in his surgery

A possibly came as a result of the deaths of his first wife and his father.

B for *The Strand* magazine.

C while he was waiting for his patients to arrive.

D to Louise Hawkins and to Elizabeth Jean Leckie.

E where he also studied at university.

F in the novel *The Lost World*.

2 True or false?

What do you know about Sherlock Holmes? Decide which sentences are true (T).

Sherlock Holmes...

- 1 wears a 'deerstalker' hat.
- 2 has a violin.
- 3 knows how to box.
- 4 wears disguises.
- 5 is married.
- 6 is also a doctor.

T	F
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA



Before you read

1 Definitions

Read this dictionary definition of the word 'scandal'. Where would you read or hear about a scandal?

'Something that shocks people because they think it is morally wrong.'

2 The set

In which European country is the area of Bohemia today?

1 Czech Republic
2 France

3 Romania
4 It doesn't exist.

3 Vocabulary

The words in the box are connected with criminals and crime solving. Use a dictionary to help you complete the table with the words given and the missing nouns or verb in its full form.

theft investigation kidnap murderer detection rob

Noun	Noun (person)	Verb
theft	thief	to <u>thieve</u>



4 Listening

Listen to the first part of the story and answer the questions.

- 1 Who is telling the story?
- 2 What is a magnifying glass?
- 3 Is Sherlock Holmes in love?



PART ONE

HOLMES RECEIVES A VISITOR

To Sherlock Holmes she is always the woman. I have not heard him speak about her by any other name. I can't imagine he felt an emotion like love. Feelings were excellent for uncovering motives but for the world's only consulting detective, an emotion like love was like a scratch¹ on his magnifying glass; it was a weakness in his perfect reasoning. There was no doubt, however, that one woman stood above all others in his eyes and that woman was Irene Adler.

For a number of years, I lived happily at 221B Baker Street with Sherlock Holmes. I often thought of calling to see him but since my move to a new house, and my recent decision to return to work as a doctor, I knew no more of Holmes's life than anyone else.

1. **scratch** : a cut with a sharp object.

PART ONE

One night, I was returning home after visiting a patient when I passed by my old rooms. I could see Holmes in the window. I watched as he walked up and down the room with his hands behind his back. Sometimes he paused, his fingers pressed to his lips in deep thought. I knew Holmes well from my experience of living with him. These were all signs that he was thinking about a case. I had some free time and I was interested to know more. The landlady, Mrs Hudson, welcomed me and led me into the sitting room. Holmes did not greet me, instead he pointed towards an armchair. He remained standing and observed me closely from the fireplace.



‘Doctor Watson, it’s good to see you looking so well. You are at least seven and half pounds heavier. You are working as a doctor again, I see.’

‘Really, Holmes!’ I exclaimed. ‘But how did you guess?’

‘And I see that your maid is careless...’ he continued.

‘Yes, you’re also right about my maid. But how do you know all this?’

‘My dear Watson,’ he said. ‘There are six scratches a few centimetres apart made by the brush your maid has used to clean the inside of your left shoe. Your maid has not done a good job because she is careless. The dot of yellow powder on your jacket is iodoform.² And I can see the mark where you keep your stethoscope³ in your hat. From these observations, I note that you’ve clearly returned to work as a doctor.’

‘Amazing!’ I exclaimed. ‘Yet when you explain it, it seems so obvious.’

2. **iodoform** : a powder once used by doctors to stop people feeling pain.

3. **stethoscope** : doctors use this to listen to your heart.

'That's because you see things but I observe things. How many times have you walked up the steps to this room?'

'Hundreds,' I replied.

'And how many steps are there?'

'I don't know.'

'Exactly! You see the steps but you haven't observed them. There are seventeen steps. Here — since you are interested in improving your observation skills, take this piece of paper and tell me what you think of it.'

He gave me a letter written on thick, pink note paper. I started to read aloud:

At a quarter to eight a gentleman will visit you about an important matter. We have received good reports of your recent services to the Dutch Royal Family. We trust you can keep a secret, but do not think it strange if the visitor wears a mask.

'There's no date and there's no signature,' I commented. 'The writer is wealthy. It's expensive paper — it's unusually strong.'

'Precisely, Watson. That's the word: it's unusual. Now, hold it to the light!'

I could see letters printed into the paper. I read: 'E-g.'

'It's the symbol of the paper company,' I suggested.

'Not only that,' said Holmes. 'The letters show us the exact location of the paper company.'

He took an atlas⁴ from his bookshelf.

'E... g... Eglow, Eglonitz... No, here it is! Egria, in Bohemia, famous for its glass and paper companies.'

He paused for a moment. I heard the sound of a horse and carriage arriving. Holmes looked out of the window.

4. **atlas**: a book showing maps and places.

PART ONE

‘Those carriages cost several thousand pounds each,’ he noted.

‘There’s money in this case, even if there’s nothing else.’

‘I should leave,’ I said.

‘No, you should stay. I might need your help.’

There was a loud knock at the door. The man who entered had an air of authority about him. He was six foot tall and had a wide chest. He wore heavy gold jewellery and a deep blue coat with a fur collar. His clothes looked expensive but they were not fashionable in England.

‘Can I trust this man?’ he asked Holmes, looking at me.

‘You can speak to both of us or neither of us,’ Holmes replied.

‘Then I will begin. I am Count Von Kramm of Bohemia,’ began the visitor in the mask. ‘I should repeat that this concerns a very important matter which the king himself is worried about.’

Holmes looked bored.

‘It is about a scandal of such importance that it could change European history,’ he continued.

‘If you could explain your case to me, Your Majesty, then maybe I can help you more easily.’

Surprised by the comment, the man took off his mask.

‘Oh, why should I hide it from you! You are an excellent detective, just as I was told! Yes, the king has not sent me. I, Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismund von Ormstein, am the King of Bohemia. Five years ago I met a lady. Maybe you know of her. Her name is Irene Adler.’

‘Adler...’ Holmes thought for a moment. ‘Now, how do I know that name?’



The text and **beyond**

PET 1 Comprehension check

Decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect. If it is correct, mark A, if it is incorrect, mark B.

- 1 Watson said Holmes loved only one woman. A B
- 2 Holmes used observation to find the answers. A B
- 3 Holmes thought the carriages looked old. A B
- 4 The visitor arrived wearing a mask. A B
- 5 The visitor was a Bohemian nobleman. A B
- 6 Five years ago the visitor met a lady called Irene Adler. A B

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 Interpretation

Choose the best meaning for:

'An emotion such as love was like a scratch on his magnifying glass.'

- 1 He hated scratches on his magnifying glass; he hated being in love.
- 2 Holmes found anything that didn't allow him a clear view annoying.
- 3 Love makes things bigger than they really are.

3 The characters

Do you think Holmes is right when he says to Watson:

'You see things, but I observe things.'

4 Reading pictures

Look at the picture on page 13 of Part One for two minutes. Turn the page so you can't see it. How much can you remember about it?

T: GRADE 6

5 Speaking: fashion

The king's clothes are said not to be 'fashionable' in England. Answer the questions about fashion.

- 1 What clothes are fashionable in your country at the moment?
- 2 Which brands are popular?
- 3 Are famous or rich people always fashionable?

PET

6 Bohemia

Read the text below and choose the correct word for each space. For each question, mark A, B, C or D.

Bohemia once covered a large area of central Europe (0) the present day Czech Republic. By medieval times Bohemia was a mostly independent state ruled by a king and then by an emperor. Bohemia became one of the (1) liberal countries in the Western world; its inhabitants spoke Czech, German and Latin and it was popular with traders. This changed in the 17th century, when their ruler wanted the inhabitants to change their religion; (2) rule ended in a long war and many of the country's nobles were killed. Today the (3) is divided into smaller districts in the Czech Republic. Interestingly, the word 'Bohemian' does not (4) describe someone from Bohemia. The word is of French origin and is often used to describe someone who is artistic, liberal, and lives independently of society's rules, for example, some artists, poets and writers.

0	A including	B using	C ending	D choosing
1	A not	B most	C worse	D too
2	A its	B her	C their	D his
3	A areas	B countries	C region	D places
4	A sometimes	B never	C lots	D always



7 Detective work

7 You want to become a consulting detective. Decide which skills you need. Take it in turns to interview another student for the job of consulting detective.

Student A: prepare questions. For example:

Can you give me an example of when you:

- *had to keep a secret?*
- *tried to solve a mystery?*
- *gave someone advice?*

Student B: prepare answers to Student A's questions.

Before you read

1 Opera quiz

In Part Two, you will read about a lady who sings opera. Test your knowledge about opera with the quiz.

- 1 The person with the main female part is
 - A the lead vocal.
 - B the leading lady.
 - C the first lady.
- 2 Which is the lowest singing voice for a female singer?
 - A soprano
 - B contralto
 - C tenor
- 3 Where is La Scala opera house?
 - A Milan
 - B New York
 - C Vienna
- 4 Compared to a musical, opera has
 - A more costumes.
 - B fewer characters.
 - C fewer spoken words.

2 Vocabulary

The title of Part Two is 'The Marriage Ceremony'. Who do you think will get married? Write eight words connected with marriage and weddings. Example: *bride*...