

NAXOS
AudioBooks

CLASSIC
FICTION



Sir Arthur
Conan Doyle

The
Adventures
of
Sherlock
Holmes
VI

Read by
David Timson

NA328012D

1	The Adventure of the 'Gloria Scott'	5:21
2	'One evening, shortly after my arrival'	5:08
3	'On the very day, however, before I left'	3:40
4	'All this occurred during the first month'	3:16
5	'Well, matters went from bad to worse'	4:10
6	'My friend ascended with the doctor'	5:50
7	'These are the very papers, Watson'	7:18
8	'That was his style of talk'	7:39
9	'And now I come to the most surprising part'	6:51
10	The Adventure of the Resident Patient	6:37
11	'I am compelled, to begin with'	4:58
12	'Some weeks ago, Mr Blessington came down to'	5:29
13	'Well, I never thought I should see anything'	4:16
14	'Within a quarter of an hour'	6:39
15	'Sherlock Holmes's prophecy was soon fulfilled'	5:25
16	'He went over to the door'	4:28
17	'"I'll be back by three"'	3:59

18	The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor	5:23
19	'He picked a red-covered volume from a line'	4:45
20	'Such as they are, they are set forth'	3:44
21	""Lord Robert St. Simon""	5:16
22	'He opened a locket'	4:47
23	'Lord St. Simon shrugged his shoulders'	3:47
24	""It is very good of Lord St. Simon to honour my head""	7:37
25	'It was after five o'clock'	5:22
26	""Frank here and I met in '84""	6:59
27	'Lord St. Simon had by no means relaxed his rigid attitude'	7:10

28	The Adventure of the Final Problem	5:33
29	'There was something very strange in all this'	3:38
30	'He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson'	3:35
31	'I was sitting in my room thinking the matter over'	6:34
32	""That was my singular interview with Professor Moriarty""	4:58
33	'In the morning I obeyed Holmes's injunction'	3:15
34	'The train had already begun to move'	4:23
35	'We made our way to Brussels that night'	4:41
36	'I shall be brief, and yet exact'	4:39
37	'It may have been a little over an hour'	3:31
38	'But it was destined that I should'	5:07

Total time: 3:16:18

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes VI

**The Adventure of the 'Gloria Scott' • The Adventure of the Resident Patient
The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor • The Adventure of the Final Problem**

THE ADVENTURE OF THE 'GLORIA SCOTT'

Perhaps this case is the most significant of all Holmes's cases, for we are told it is his very first one, occurring when he was still a student in the 1870s, and led him, as he said in **The Musgrave Ritual**, another early case, 'in the direction of the profession which has become my life's work'.

Doyle tactfully does not specify which college Holmes attended, and Holmes scholars have convincing arguments for both Oxford and Cambridge. Whichever it was, Holmes, never the most sociable of men, appears to have had a lonely and solitary time as a student, for he claims that Victor Trevor was his only college friend. He had had a 'slight acquaintance' with Reginald Musgrave who was in his college, but Musgrave's aristocratic bearing made him 'generally unpopular among the undergraduates' (see **The Musgrave Ritual** on NA319112). One imagines that Holmes himself was not the easiest of men to

get on with, and though not always appreciative, he was most fortunate to find so accommodating, generous and understanding a friend as Watson.

Although in this case we get a glimpse of the embryonic detective at work, it is hardly a detective story at all. There are few deductions beyond the initial one of uncovering old Trevor's guilty past, for Holmes to get his teeth into. The whole thrust of the story, in fact, is more in the style of a criminal's true confession, or a good old-fashioned seaman's yarn packed with thrills. Doyle's best writing is often to be found in his vivid descriptions of action. It was a skill he had first honed as a young man in 1880, when he signed on as a surgeon on board a whaling ship. During the long Arctic voyage he listened to the tales of the ship's rough crew and, as an exercise, turned them into fiction. It gave him the confidence to be a writer and left him with a taste for writing adventure stories that he was never to lose. Doyle, too,

must have felt that he had not entirely done his detective's powers justice in this story, for in **The Resident Patient** Watson laments the fact that Holmes's involvement in the '**Gloria Scott**' case 'has been less pronounced than I, as his biographer, could wish'. Nevertheless the prophetic words of Trevor Senior: '...it seems to me that all the detectives of fact and of fancy would be children in your hands', persuaded young Holmes of his destiny. Shortly afterwards, his other college friend Musgrave endorsed Holmes's instincts by engaging him to solve the fascinating puzzle of **The Musgrave Ritual**, and the profession of consulting detective was born.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE RESIDENT PATIENT

It is Dr. Percy Trevelyan who brings this curious case to the notice of Holmes. As a brilliant but impoverished medical student he agrees to accept financial help from the enigmatic Blessington in return for his becoming Trevelyan's resident patient. As Dr. Trevelyan recounts his early struggles, we are inevitably reminded of the hardships Conan Doyle himself suffered as he endeavoured to establish himself in medicine. How he would have grabbed at

the chance to have a wealthy benefactor like Blessington. Dr. Trevelyan, whose ambition was to be a specialist in nervous diseases, states ruefully: 'a specialist who aims high is compelled to start in one of a dozen streets in the Cavendish Square quarter, all of which entail enormous rents and furnishing expenses'. Doyle is no doubt speaking from the heart, as he had in 1891 taken the decision to become an eye specialist after a rudimentary training in the subject in Vienna, and had rashly set up a surgery in fashionable Wimpole Street. It was a moment of psychological struggle for Doyle. He had already had success with the first Sherlock Holmes novel **A Study in Scarlet**, but he was reluctant to admit to himself that all his medical training had been in vain. To become a fashionable eye specialist was his last bid to secure for himself a medical reputation. It was an unmitigated failure. He must have known it was a fool's errand, for on the very day he moved into his practice, he had begun to write the first of the Holmes short stories, **A Scandal in Bohemia**.

When Doyle published this story in book form, he included a set piece of deduction by Holmes of Watson's thoughts, as he sits in a 'brown study'. The section had been

lifted from **The Adventure of the Cardboard Box**, and it would seem that the illicit love affair which is at the centre of that story was too close for comfort for Doyle. He refused to allow the story to be reprinted in book form. His own difficult private life during the 1890s may have prompted his moral conscience. In 1893, his wife Louise showed the first signs of consumption. It was a long and wasting disease, and Doyle loyally nursed his sick wife for the rest of her days, but by 1897 he had formed a platonic liaison with Jean Leckie. Later she would become his second wife. Perhaps these circumstances explain why **The Cardboard Box** was not published officially until 1917 in **His Last Bow**.

But the professional writer in Doyle could not waste so excellent a piece as the mind-reading sequence, so it was imported into **The Resident Patient** when it appeared in book form. Naxos AudioBooks follows the original Strand Magazine versions for these recordings as expressing Doyle's first thoughts and original intentions, so the 'deduction' sequence does not appear in this story. However, if the listener refers to the recording of **The Cardboard Box** on Naxos AudioBooks

NA319112, it can be heard in its original context.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE NOBLE BACHELOR

There is more than a whiff of radicalism in this story. Lord Robert Walsingham de Vere St. Simon, second son of the Duke of Balmoral, consults Holmes about the mysterious disappearance of his wife on their wedding day, but a more unsympathetic client Holmes seldom had the misfortune to encounter. Stiff and bristling with aristocratic privilege, Doyle tells us he had 'a touch of petulance about the mouth...a man whose pleasant lot it had ever been to command and to be obeyed'.

To complete the picture of an upper-class ne'er do well, St. Simon's dress is described as 'careful to the verge of foppishness'. To emphasise his distaste with the habits of the rich, Doyle brings a contemporary element into his story: aristocratic liaisons with chorus girls and American heiresses. The list of girls who appeared at the Gaiety Theatre, for instance, and charmed the titled young men across the footlights, was endless in this period, so much so that the press called them 'the actressocracy'.

When Doyle wrote this story in 1892, the most recent in the line, Connie Gilchrist, the beautiful daughter of a civil engineer, had married the seventh Earl of Orkney. Their marriage proved successful, lasting 54 years, but many such ended in the divorce courts, or in the ruined reputation of the actress. Doyle implies that St. Simon's former flirtation, Miss Flora Miller, 'a *danseuse* at the Allegro', is likely to suffer such a fate. Weddings between the daughters of wealthy Americans and English aristocrats, such as St. Simon's to Hatty Doran, were also increasing, the most famous being that of Jenny Jerome to Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Winston's parents. It is certain that such 'arrangements' provided much-needed American dollars for the impoverished coffers of England's jaded aristocracy; in exchange the heiress got a title. If Doyle in this story displays his radicalism by being less than supportive of the establishment as represented by St. Simon, his solution to the problem is nothing short of revolutionary! Doyle had long had a love-affair with anything American. He loved the frankness of the people, their literature and their championing of liberty and he puts into Holmes's mouth his belief that civilisation depended on the union of Britain and

America, and its peoples becoming 'citizens of the same worldwide country under a flag which shall be a quartering of the Union Jack with the Stars and Stripes'. When Doyle wrote that, with the British Empire at its height, he no doubt envisaged Britain being the dominant partner, today he might not be so sure.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE FINAL PROBLEM

Without doubt this is the most controversial Sherlock Holmes story Doyle ever wrote. For it is in this tale that Doyle ruthlessly kills off the great detective. The shock on the unsuspecting reading public was profound; young men besieged the offices of *The Strand* magazine wearing black armbands, the Americans thought the story must be a fake, even Doyle's mother thought it a 'beastly' thing to do. So why did he do it? It seems that Doyle never took his Holmes stories seriously. They had been a means of keeping body and soul together whilst he struggled to be a doctor but, as he said himself of Holmes, 'he takes my mind from better things'. The 'better things' were what he termed his serious literary efforts, his carefully researched historical novels, such as **The White Company**, a tale of medieval chivalry, and **Rodney Stone**, set in the

Regency period. He complained that Holmes was killing him as a serious writer and no one, publishers or friends, could persuade him to relent.

A trip to Switzerland in 1893, for his wife Louise's health, had given him a suitably impressive scene for Holmes's demise, the Reichenbach Falls – 'a worthy tomb for poor Sherlock, even if I buried my banking account along with him'. To kill off the detective that feeds you shows how strongly Doyle felt about his serious writing. Angry at the outcry Holmes's death produced he said: 'I feel towards him as I do towards pâté de foie gras, of which I once ate too much, so that the name of it

gives me a sickly feeling to this day'. But the 'final problem' turned out to be Doyle's. For eight years, the public showed no signs of letting Sherlock Holmes lie down and die, and most reluctantly Doyle was forced to turn away from the literature he considered to be his life's work and, as he saw it, trivialise his talents on potboilers. Posterity is grateful for his artistic sacrifice: the Sherlock Holmes canon is read again and again worldwide; the historical novels are read today by only the most loyal of aficionados.

Notes by David Timson

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

DVOŘÁK String Quartets No 5 Op 9 & No 7 Op 16 Vlach Quartet Prague	8.553377
PAGANINI 24 Caprices Op 1 Ilya Kaler, Violin	8.550717
MENDELSSOHN Complete Works for Violin & Piano Nomos Duo	8.554725

Music programmed by Sarah Butcher

Cover illustration by Hemesh Alles

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes VI

The Adventure of the 'Gloria Scott' • The Adventure of the Resident Patient
The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor • The Adventure of the Final Problem

Read by **David Timson**

In *The Final Problem*, perhaps the greatest of short stories of Sherlock Holmes, the English detective encounters his most formidable rival, Professor Moriarty. 'The Napoleon of Crime' is how Holmes describes his adversary to his faithful companion, Dr Watson, as they move to the ultimate confrontation at the Reichenbach Falls. Also in this collection is the intriguing mystery of the disappearing bride in *The Noble Bachelor*, and two threats from the past in '*Gloria Scott*' and *The Resident Patient*. Classic Sherlock Holmes.



David Timson has performed in modern and classic plays across the country and abroad, including *Wild Honey* for Alan Ayckbourn, *Hamlet*, *The Man of Mode* and *The Seagull*. He has been seen on TV in *Nelson's Column* and *Swallows and Amazons*, and in the film *The Russia House*. A familiar and versatile audio and radio voice, he reads *The Middle Way* and performs in *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Naxos AudioBooks. This is his sixth volume of Sherlock Holmes stories for Naxos AudioBooks.

"David Timson is one of the best readers around. He has plenty of opportunity to demonstrate his striking range of voices and accents in the four stories in this latest collection."

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER, THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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