

Penguin



Readers

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

SHERLOCK HOLMES



SHORT STORIES



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Note about the stories

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1859. He became a doctor but he did not have enough work, so he started to write short stories.

Doyle wrote his first Sherlock Holmes story in three weeks in 1886, and he sold it for £25. People liked the story and they wanted more. Doyle agreed to write a lot more stories for the *Strand Magazine*.

Sherlock Holmes is an intelligent **detective*** and he usually works with his friend Dr Watson. Watson helps Holmes with his **cases** and writes about them. Holmes does not work for the police, but he sometimes helps them. Often, people with problems come to Holmes in his flat at 221B Baker Street in London. He usually **solves** the crimes.

Before-reading questions

- 1 Look at the “People and animals in the stories” on page 4. Choose three of them and describe them.
- 2 Look at the pictures inside the book and read the “Note about the story”. Are these sentences *true* or *false*?
 - a Sherlock Holmes is a detective.
 - b Sherlock Holmes works with another man.
 - c Sherlock Holmes lives in a big house in the mountains.

*Definitions of words in **bold** can be found in the glossary on pages 77–79.

The adventure of the diamond

It was a few days after Christmas, and it was very cold. I decided to visit my friend Mr Sherlock Holmes. I am a doctor, but I sometimes help Holmes and I write about his **detective** work. This evening, he was in the living room of his flat at 221B Baker Street. He was sitting on the sofa and he was looking closely at an old hat.

“Are you working, Holmes?” I asked.

“Ah, Watson,” he said. “Please sit down. It’s good to see you. I’d like to talk about this hat with you.”

I sat down in an armchair. There was a good fire, and I was happy to be warm.

“It’s not a very interesting hat,” I said, “but is it a **clue** to a terrible crime?”

“There’s no crime,” said Holmes, “but the hat is interesting. Do you know Peterson? He works near here.”

“Yes, I do. Is it his hat?” I asked.

“No, he found it. He brought it here on Christmas morning. He also brought a fat **goose**. This is his story. At four o’clock on Christmas morning, Peterson was walking home from work. It was dark, of course, but there were streetlamps. In front of him, Peterson saw a tall man in a hat. The man was carrying a dead goose. It was white with a black head.

“At the corner of Goodge Street, a group of three or four men attacked the man with the goose. He had a **walking stick** and he tried to fight the men with it, but he broke a shop window behind him. He didn’t



want the police to **arrest** him, so he ran away, but he couldn’t take the goose and the hat fell from his head. The other men ran away, too. Peterson brought the hat and the goose to me.”

“Why didn’t he take them to the owner?” I asked.

“He couldn’t. There was a card on the goose:

for Mrs Henry Baker.

“And inside the hat were the letters H. B. But there are thousands of Bakers, and hundreds of Henry Bakers in London. It won’t be easy to find him. I kept the goose for a few days, but I sent it back to Peterson this morning. The weather is cold, but someone needed to eat it quickly. It was beginning to smell. But what does the hat tell us, Watson?”

I looked at the hat closely for a minute or two. It was round and black, and it was not new. There was no maker’s name, only the letters H. B. It was dirty. In some places the black was grey, and there was black paint on the hat to **hide** the grey. “I can’t see anything,” I said, and gave the hat back to my friend.

“You see,” said Holmes, “but you don’t understand. The man is intelligent, and three years ago he had some money, but he doesn’t now. He has started to drink too much, and his wife doesn’t love him. He doesn’t go out very much, but someone cut his hair a few days ago. Do you understand now?”

“No. Why is he intelligent?”

“It’s a big hat, so he has a big head.”

“And he had money in the past, but not now?”

“Yes. It’s an expensive hat. He had money three years ago, but he doesn’t have money now because he hasn’t bought a new one. The hat is dirty, but it’s dirty from a house, not from the street. And his wife doesn’t clean his hat. If your wife loves you, Watson, your hat is always clean.”

I laughed. “You’re very clever, Holmes,” I said.

Then, suddenly, the door of Holmes’ flat opened. It was Peterson.

“Mr Holmes!” he shouted. He was excited and his face was bright red.

“What’s happened?” asked Holmes.

“Look at this! My wife found it in the goose’s stomach.” Peterson opened his hand and showed us a beautiful blue stone. “It’s a diamond!”



“It’s the Countess of Morcar’s blue diamond,” said Holmes. “Someone stole it a week ago. There’s a **reward** of one thousand pounds for it.”

“A thousand pounds!” said Peterson, in surprise. He sat down very suddenly.