

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Chapters 6 and 7 (Part 1)

Author: Daniel Barber

Level: Intermediate

Age: Young adults / Adults

Time: 45 minutes (60 with optional activity)

Aims: In this lesson, students will:

1. make some predictions about the ending;
2. listen to check their predictions;
3. become more aware of, and practise, sentence stress including emphatic stress;
4. listen to the end of the story for gist;
5. explore the main characters' personalities.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student; Track 1 (the whole of Chapter 6), Track 2 (an extract from Chapter 6) and Track 3 (the whole of Chapter 7) downloaded from onestopenglish; one copy of the play script for Chapter 6 per student; one copy of the full transcript per student

Summary: Sherlock Holmes and his assistant, Doctor Watson, are visited by two very important gentlemen: the Prime Minister and the Minister for Europe, Mr Hope. They want Holmes's help in an extremely delicate matter. Hope has lost a document, the existence of which, if made public, could threaten the peace and stability of Britain. In the final chapters, Holmes and Watson go to Whitehall Terrace, the home of Trelawney Hope and his wife, Lady Hilda, and the scene of the other crime, where the unhappy criminal is waiting for them.

Speaking

Aim: to predict the end of the story

1. Explain that the class is going to listen to the two final chapters in the story today. They will hear the resolution to the mystery of the missing letter. Before they listen, put them into groups of between three and five students. Hand out the worksheets and direct their attention to the speaking activity. Give them three or four minutes to discuss their ideas and theories. Go around the groups, listening to their ideas and encouraging more ideas if necessary.

2. Get the class's attention. Invite different groups to tell everyone their theories; they should compare their ideas and challenge other groups if they disagree. Make sure you explore all the key elements of the story:

- the news from Paris about Lucas's private life;

- Eduardo Lucas's role and the reason for his death;
- who the beautiful lady was at Godolphin Street;
- why the policeman reacted to whatever Holmes showed him.

3. As they are discussing, you might make notes on the board about the different ideas that are generated.

Listening 1

Aims: to find out what happens; to check some of the students' predictions

1. Tell the class that they are now going to check their predictions. Play Track 1, the whole of Chapter 6.

2. Put the students in pairs. Ask them to complete the notes in the first listening activity on the worksheet. Give them a few minutes for this.

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Chapters 6 and 7 (Part 1)

Key: 1. ... *Whitehall Terrace / to the Hopes' house.*; 2. ... *Lady Hilda Hope.*; 3. ... *is very angry / denies the accusation that Holmes is making.*; 4. ... *she gave Lucas the letter and returned to his house and recovered the letter last night.*; 5. ... *force her to tell him the truth by threatening to talk to her husband about it.*; 6. ... *gets the letter from the writing desk / gives Holmes the letter.*; 7. ... *the letter back in Mr Hope's dispatch box.*

3. Remind the students about their predictions. Ask which predictions were right and congratulate any correct predictions.

Language

Aim: to become more aware of, and practise, sentence stress, including emphatic stress

1. Write on the board what Holmes says at the beginning of Chapter 6:

'We're going to Whitehall Terrace, Watson, to see the last act of this strange play.'

Ask the students what they think Holmes means when he says this. Explain that, before they listen to Chapter 7 and the end of the story, they are going to practise saying the dialogue between Holmes and Lady Hilda. Tell them that, in the final lesson, they are going to put on a mini-play of the last act of the story or 'play'.

2. Hand out the play script. Point to the boxed area and explain that the underlined words show where Lady Hilda stresses the important words in each sentence. Play the first part of Track 2 and let them follow her lines, paying attention to the words she stresses.

3. Ask them what they notice about the stressed words. Elicit that they tend to be the more important words that convey the meaning of the sentences. For example,

she stresses *unkind* because this adjective conveys the important information of the sentence. She stresses *not* in the following sentence because the negation is key to what she wants to say.

4. Put the students in pairs. Ask them to underline the important words in the rest of the boxed area. Encourage them to check their ideas by reading the lines out loud. Give them a few minutes for this. Background music may help them feel less embarrassed about saying the sentences out loud. As you go around the groups, encourage them to think about the emotions of the speakers and to say the lines as if they were them.

5. Play Track 2 so that they can check their ideas. You should explain that the script they have been given is not exactly the same as the audio. Once they have listened, let them check their answers with another pair. Giving definitive answers on sentences stress is not easy because words are all stressed to different degrees and our appreciation of stressed words is subjective. If you like, you can check their answers with this key but it is probably best only to use it in the case of serious disagreements.

Key:

Holmes: *Lady Hilda, I have been asked by your husband to recover a document. I am sorry, but the only way I could do that was to come here. Where is the letter, Lady Hilda? I know that you know where it is. Please tell me the truth, and I will help you.*

Lady Hilda: *You are very wrong, Mr Holmes, and you have insulted me. Get out of my house. I shall ring the bell for the butler and ask him to make you leave.*

Holmes: *If you do that, we will not be able to save your husband from a scandal. His reputation and his career will be ruined. Your life will be ruined. I ask you again, Lady Hilda, please tell me the truth.*

Lady Hilda: *I can tell you nothing!*

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Chapters 6 and 7 (Part 1)

Note: The stress of *your* in 'Your life will be ruined' contrasts it with the previous statement that her husband's career will be ruined. It is an example of contrastive stress.

Listening 2

Aims: to listen for gist; to find out why Lady Hilda stole the letter and how the story concludes

1. Explain that the class is going to listen now to the final chapter of the story. Point the students towards the second listening activity and ask them to look at the three definitions. Test their understanding by reading out the scenarios below and asking them which of the crimes each scenario represents:

- A politician promises to give anyone who votes for him a computer. (*bribery*)
- Someone has a photograph of a film star with no clothes on. They ask the star for \$1,000 to give them the photos. (*blackmail*)
- A mother says the children can have ice cream if they do their homework. (*bribery*)
- A salesman persuades a student to buy a computer programme that will help them learn English in six months. It is a terrible product full of errors and bad English. (*fraud*)

Ask volunteers to guess which of the crimes is most relevant to 'The Second Stain'. Field answers without telling them anything about the ending.

2. Play Track 3. When it has finished, establish that Lucas blackmailed Lady Hilda by threatening to show her husband a love letter if she didn't get the letter from the foreign ruler for him. She had written the letter to a man she knew before she met her husband. Then, ask the group the following questions:

- How did Lucas know about the letter? (*An official in Mr Hope's ministry sold him the information.*)
- How did Lady Hilda steal the document? (*Lucas helped her to copy the key to the dispatch box.*)
- Why did the other woman kill Lucas? (*She was Madame Fournaye and she thought Lucas was seeing another woman – Lady Hilda – who happened to be there at the time.*)
- Why is Trelawney Hope angry with Holmes? (*Holmes is effectively saying that he didn't look very carefully in his dispatch box.*)
- What is Mr Hope's reaction when he finds the letter in his box? (*He is surprised, happy and relieved.*)
- What does Lord Bellinger think at the end of the story? (*He doesn't believe the letter was there the whole time. He is very impressed with Holmes.*)
- Did you enjoy the story?
- Do you have any questions or comments?

Writing (optional)

Aim: to write a review of the story

1. Ask the class that, now they've listened to a Sherlock Holmes story, would they like to read one? Field answers, eliciting their reasons why and why not. Encourage them to think of various factors, such as:

- the quality of the stories;
- the length of each chapter;
- the ease of understanding the English.

Also, ask them who might enjoy a book of this sort.

2. Write on the board www.goodreads.com and ask if anyone knows the site. Even if

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Chapters 6 and 7 (Part 1)

they don't, they may be able to guess that it is a site that allows users to recommend books to other users. Tell them that they are going to write a short review, or recommendation, for *The Second Stain* on www.goodreads.com.

3. Hand out the writing activity worksheet. Point out the sentence beginnings but encourage them to use their own words. Tell them that their reviews will be displayed for the whole class to read. Give them ten minutes or so to write and, as they do so, circulate, making useful suggestions and corrections.

4. When they have finished their writing, have them post their reviews up on the wall or lay them out on tables around the room. Invite the class to read each other's reviews to find any that are very different from theirs.

Note: Ask students to bring the play scripts for Chapter 6 to the next lesson.

Follow-up tasks

- The students find the original, unsimplified version of the story online and compare a short section from the last chapter with the same section in the simplified reader.
- They learn some lines of the play script off by heart.

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Chapters 6 and 7 (Part 1)

Speaking

Discuss your answers to the questions.

1. What do you think Holmes has realized at Godolphin Street?
2. How are the two crimes connected?
3. Who stole the document, in your opinion?
4. Where are Holmes and Watson going next? What will Holmes do there?
5. How will Holmes resolve the story?

Listening 1

Listen to Chapter 6. After you have listened, complete the notes.

1. Holmes and Watson go to ...
2. They talk to ...
3. At first, this person ...
4. Holmes says that he knows ...
5. But Holmes manages to ...
6. Then, this person ...
7. Holmes puts ...

Listening 2

Read these definitions of three crimes. Then listen to the story and decide which is most relevant to *The Second Stain*.

fraud to obtain money from someone by tricking them; or to produce false documents or information in order to get what you want

blackmail to make someone give you money or do what you want by threatening to tell people embarrassing information about them

bribery to give money or presents to someone so that they will help you by doing something for you

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Chapters 6 and 7 (Part 1)

Act VI: In the Hope family living room (Chapter 6)

[The Hope family sitting room, decorated with expensive furniture and paintings. There is a writing desk in the corner of the room and a bell hanging next to the door. Jeeves, the butler, enters, followed by Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson.]

HOLMES: We would like to see Lady Hilda, please.

BUTLER: Certainly, sir. I will tell her that you are here. [**He leaves.**]

WATSON: What are you going to say to her?

HOLMES: You will see, my dear Watson. You will see.

LADY HILDA: [**enters room**] Mr Holmes, you are unkind. You should not have come here. I do not want my husband to know about my visit to you – I told you that. He must not find out that I have talked to you. He will be home very soon. I must ask you to leave immediately.

HOLMES: Lady Hilda, I have been asked by your husband to recover a document. I am sorry, but the only way I could do that was to come here. Where is the letter, Lady Hilda? I know that you know where it is. Please tell me the truth, and I will help you.

LADY HILDA: [**angrily**] You are very wrong, Mr Holmes, and you have insulted me. Get out of my house. [**desperately**] I shall ring the bell for the butler and ask him to make you leave.' [**She begins walking towards the bell.**]

HOLMES: If you do that, we will not be able to save your husband from a scandal. His reputation and his career will be ruined. Your life will be ruined. I ask you again, Lady Hilda, please tell me the truth.

LADY HILDA: I can tell you nothing!

HOLMES: Then I will tell you what I know. I know that you visited Eduardo Lucas on Monday evening and gave him the missing document. I know that you returned to his house last night. I know that you found the hiding place under the carpet. I know that you recovered the document from it. I know that because I showed this picture to the policeman at the house. He recognized it immediately. [**He takes from his pocket a small portrait of Lady Hilda**] Lady Hilda, I do not wish to cause any trouble for you. When I have recovered the letter, my job here is finished. I will not share your secret with anyone. I will not tell your husband about it. But I must have the letter.

LADY HILDA: You are obviously unwell, Mr Holmes. You are mad. You are talking nonsense. Leave this house now.

[**Holmes rings the bell for the butler. The butler appears.**]

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Chapters 6 and 7 (Part 1)

HOLMES: [**coldly**] I need to see Mr Trelawney Hope. I have something very important to tell him.

BUTLER: Mr Hope is not here now, but he will return in fifteen minutes. He is bringing the Prime Minister home for luncheon.

HOLMES: I will wait for him.

[**The butler leaves. Lady Hilda starts to cry. She kneels in front of Holmes.**]

LADY HILDA: I will tell you the truth. I see now that I must tell you. But please don't tell my husband what I am going to say to you. It would break his heart.

HOLMES: [**helping her to stand up**] I'm glad that you have decided to do the right thing. I will do everything I can to help you. But we don't have much time. Your husband will soon be here. Where is the letter?

[**Lady Hilda runs to a writing desk in the corner of the room, unlocks it with a key and takes out the envelope.**]

LADY HILDA: [**bitterly**] Here it is. I wish I had never seen it!

HOLMES: How can we return it to your husband without him knowing that you had it, I wonder? Where is your husband's dispatch box?

LADY HILDA: It's still in our bedroom.

HOLMES: Please go and get it quickly. [**Lady Hilda leaves.**]

WATSON: I don't understand! Why would Lady Hilda steal the document from her own husband?

HOLMES: We will find out soon enough.

[**Lady Hilda returns with the box.**]

HOLMES: How did you open it when you took the letter? [**suddenly realizing**] Of course, you copied the key. Open the box, please.

[**Lady Hilda takes a small key from her dress and opens the box. Holmes pushes the letter into a document in the box. Lady Hilda returns the box to the bedroom.**]

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Chapter 6

Where are we going, Holmes?’ I asked as we walked away from the house.

‘We’re going to Whitehall Terrace, Watson, to see the last act of this strange play,’ he replied.

When we arrived at Mr Trelawney Hope’s house, Holmes asked to see Lady Hilda. We were shown into a large sitting room, and a minute later Lady Hilda Hope entered. She looked **pale** and frightened.

‘Mr Holmes,’ she said, ‘you are unkind. You should not have come here. I do not want my husband to know about my visit to you – I told you that. He must not find out that I have talked to you. He will be home very soon. I must ask you to leave immediately.’

‘Lady Hilda, I have been asked by your husband to recover a document,’ Holmes replied. ‘I am sorry, but the only way I could do that was to come here. Where is the letter, Lady Hilda? I know that you know where it is. Please tell me the truth, and I will help you.’

‘You are very wrong, Mr Holmes, and you have **insulted** me,’ the young woman said angrily. ‘Get out of my house. I shall ring the bell for the **butler** and ask him to make you leave.’ She looked **desperate**, but it was obvious that she was not going to admit that Holmes was right. She began walking towards the bell.

‘If you do that, we will not be able to save your husband from a scandal,’ said Holmes. ‘His reputation and his career will be ruined. Your life will be ruined. I ask you again, Lady Hilda, please tell me the truth.’

‘I can tell you nothing!’ she said.

‘Then I will tell you what I know,’ Holmes replied. ‘I know that you visited Eduardo Lucas on Monday evening and gave him the missing document. I know that you returned to his house last night. I know that you found the hiding place under the carpet. I know that you recovered the document from it. I know that because I showed this picture to the policeman at the house. He recognized it immediately.’

He took from his pocket a small picture which he had cut from a magazine. It was a portrait of Lady Hilda Hope.

‘Lady Hilda,’ Holmes went on, ‘I do not wish to cause any trouble for you. When I have recovered the letter, my job here is finished. I will not share your secret with anyone. I will not tell your husband about it. But I must have the letter.’

‘You are obviously unwell, Mr Holmes,’ the woman said. ‘You are mad. You are talking nonsense. Leave this house now.’ Then Holmes surprised her. He rang the bell for the butler himself. When the man appeared, Holmes asked to see Mr Trelawney Hope. ‘I have something very important to tell him,’ he said coldly.

‘Mr Hope is not here now, but he will return in fifteen minutes,’ the butler said. ‘He is bringing the Prime Minister home for **luncheon**.’

‘I will wait for him,’ Holmes replied.

As soon as the butler left the room, Lady Hilda started to cry. She had tried to fight us but she could not go on fighting. She **knelt** in front of Holmes and looked up at him. The tears ran down her beautiful face.

Track 1

Track 2

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Chapter 6

'I will tell you the truth,' she said. 'I see now that I must tell you. But please don't tell my husband what I am going to say to you. It would break his heart.'

Holmes helped her to stand up. 'I'm glad that you have decided to do the right thing,' he said. 'I will do everything I can to help you. But we don't have much time. Your husband will soon be here. Where is the letter?'

Lady Hilda ran to a writing desk in the corner of the room, unlocked it with a key, and took out a long, thin, blue envelope.

'Here it is,' she said, bitterly. 'I wish I had never seen it!'

'How can we return it to your husband without him knowing that you had it, I wonder?' Holmes said. 'Where is your husband's dispatch box?'

'It's still in our bedroom,' Lady Hilda replied.

'Please go and get it quickly,' said Holmes. Lady Hilda quickly returned with the box.

'How did you open it when you took the letter?' Holmes asked her. Then he answered his own question. 'Of course, you copied the key,' he said, before she could speak. 'Open the box, please.'

Lady Hilda took a small key from a pocket in her dress and opened the dispatch box. It was full of documents. Holmes pushed the letter between the pages of one of the thick documents near the bottom of the box. In a few minutes, the box was back in its place in the bedroom.

Glossary

pale with lighter skin than usual because of illness, shock or worry

insulted said or did something that shows a lack of respect for someone

butler the most important male servant in a rich person's house, whose job is to organize the other servants, to welcome guests, to pour wine at meals, etc

desperate very worried and angry because you do not know how to deal with an unpleasant situation

luncheon a formal word for *lunch*

knelt put one or both knees on the ground (infinitive: *kneel*)

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Chapter 7

When Lady Hilda returned to the sitting room, Holmes smiled.

‘We have done our best to protect your reputation,’ he said. ‘We now have ten minutes before your husband returns. Will you tell me why you took the letter?’

‘I will tell you the whole story,’ Lady Hilda said. ‘When I said that I kept no secrets from my husband, I wasn’t telling you the truth. Many years ago, when I was an innocent girl, I wrote a letter to someone – a man. This was before I knew my husband. It was a foolish letter, but it was the letter of a young girl in love for the first time. I did not understand that it could cause trouble for me in the future. Until recently, I thought that the whole thing was forgotten long ago. Then, last week, I heard from Mr Eduardo Lucas. He told me that he had my letter. He also told me that my husband had a document which he wanted. One of the officials in my husband’s ministry had sold him the information. Lucas said that I must steal the document for him. He said that if I did not steal it, he would send my letter to my husband.’

‘I knew that if my husband saw my letter, he would lose his trust in me,’ she went on. ‘He has a very strong sense of honour and he would not understand that I wrote the letter innocently. I didn’t know what was in the document that Lucas wanted. Please believe that. Lucas didn’t tell me and my husband has never talked to me about his work. I thought that my happiness and my marriage were much more important than any political document could be. I didn’t know that the document was so important to the peace of Europe, Mr Holmes. I only learnt that when I spoke to you, after I had taken it.’

‘I made a wax impression of my husband’s key,’ Lady Hilda said. ‘Lucas made a new key from the impression and gave it to me. On Monday evening I used the new key to steal the document, then I went out. I told my husband I was going to the theatre, but I took the document to Lucas’s house. In the street outside the house, I noticed a woman. I knocked on the door and Lucas let me in. He didn’t close the door because I only meant to stay a moment. We went into the front room and we made the exchange – Lucas gave me my letter and I gave him the document.’

‘Suddenly, there was a noise in the hall outside the room,’ she continued. ‘Lucas quickly pulled back a corner of the carpet and hid the document in a hole under the floor. He had just replaced the carpet when a woman entered the room – the woman I had seen outside the house. She screamed at Lucas. She said that she had caught him with his other wife at last. She took a knife that was hanging on the wall and she attacked him.’

‘There was a struggle, and the furniture was turned over,’ Lady Hilda said. ‘But the woman was strong and she stabbed Lucas with the knife. I ran from the house as fast as I could. You know the rest of the story, Mr Holmes. Last night, I recovered the document. But I couldn’t think of a way of giving it back to my husband without telling him the truth. And I couldn’t do that. It would have been the end of our marriage.’

As she finished speaking, we heard the front door open. A moment later, Trelawney Hope and Lord Bellinger entered the room.

‘Have you got good news for us, Mr Holmes?’ Hope asked.

‘Yes, I no longer believe that this country is in danger,’ said Holmes.

‘That is certainly good news,’ said Hope. Then he spoke to his wife. ‘Will you leave us

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Chapter 7

for a few minutes, my dear? We need to talk about politics. We will join you soon for lunch.'

When Lady Hilda had left the room, Holmes spoke to Trelawney Hope.

'Mr Hope,' he said, 'I believe that you have made a mistake. I don't believe that the missing letter ever left this house. If it had, someone would have published it by now. I don't believe that it ever left your dispatch box. I think it has probably become mixed up with the other papers in the box. Will you search the box again, please?'

Trelawney Hope started to argue with Holmes. 'This is not the time to joke. I'm quite sure that the letter is not in the dispatch box,' he said angrily.

But then Lord Bellinger spoke. 'We can easily decide who is right,' he said. 'Send for the box, Hope, and we will search it here.'

Hope walked to the bell and rang for his valet. He told the man to bring the dispatch box from his bedroom. When the valet returned to the room with it, the Minister for European Affairs took a small key from his pocket and opened the box. He started to search through the papers.

'As you can see, Mr Holmes,' he began, 'the letter is not—' Then he stopped. 'Good heavens!' he said. He held up the thin, blue envelope. 'You were right, it was here. And I'm very happy to see it. You must be a magician, Mr Holmes. How did you know it was in the box, after all?'

'I knew it was there because I knew that it was nowhere else,' Holmes replied with a smile.

'I must go and tell my wife,' said the Minister. 'She will be as happy as I am. She has been so worried about the disappearance.' He quickly left the room.

Lord Bellinger looked carefully at Holmes's face. His wonderful eyes were smiling brightly.

'How did the letter really get back into the box, Mr Holmes?' he asked quietly.

'Ah. We also have our diplomatic secrets!' Holmes replied.