

## A Scandal in Bohemia by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Chapter 2

**Author:** Daniel Barber

**Level:** Intermediate

**Age:** Young adults / Adults

**Time:** 45 minutes (60 with optional activity)

**Aims:** In this lesson, students will:

1. discuss possible problems involving four key words;
2. listen for gist and to complete detailed notes;
3. become more aware of connected speech (liaison) (optional);
4. practise connecting words while reading out loud (optional);
5. write a love letter between two of the characters.

**Materials:** One copy of the worksheet per student; Track 1 (first part of Chapter 2); Track 2 (the rest of Chapter 2); Track 3 (short extract) and Track 4 (full audio) downloaded from onestopenglish; one copy of the full transcript per student

**Summary:** This is a rare case for Sherlock Holmes; the visit to his Baker Street residence by a worried foreign gentleman heralds the beginning of a mystery in which Holmes, for once, meets his match and fails to outwit an impressive and surprising adversary. In Chapter 2, the king explains his problem. A few years ago, when still a prince, he acted indiscreetly. Now, as king of Bohemia and fiancé of Princess Clotilde, his past has come back to haunt him. Can Holmes help?

### Vocabulary

**Aim:** to prepare students for listening by learning some key words from the story

1. Ask students to recap Chapter 1 by answering the following questions.

- What did Holmes show Watson when he arrived at his flat? (*a letter*)
- What did the letter say? (*that someone wearing a mask was going to come and ask for help*)
- What do we know about the problem? (*It involves a secret and requires Holmes's discretion.*)
- What did the man look like? (*He was very tall and wore rich, foreign-looking clothes.*)
- What did he say his name was? (*Count von Kramm*)

- Who was he really? (*Wilhelm Sigismund von Ormstein, Duke of Cassel and, most importantly, King of Bohemia*)

2. Tell students that they will find out in this chapter what the king's problem is. Hand out the worksheet and draw the class's attention to the four words in the vocabulary activity. Explain that these are key words from Chapter 2. Tell them to read the definitions. Then, ask them to get into small groups of three or four.

3. Tell the class that they must invent a possible problem for the king. Explain that you will award one point to a group if it can incorporate one of the words plausibly into the problem, two points if they incorporate two words, three for three and the maximum four points if they can invent a problem that includes all four words.

4. Give them a few minutes to discuss their answers. Then, invite spokespersons from each group to tell the class their ideas. Don't give anything away at this stage!

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### Chapter 2

#### Listening 1

**Aims:** to check predictions; to listen for gist

1. Tell them to listen to the first part of Chapter 2 and answer the questions on the worksheet. Play Track 1.

2. When the track has finished, give students a minute to compare their answers in pairs before conducting whole-class feedback.

**Key:** 1. Five years ago the king, then a prince, fell in love with an opera singer, Irene Adler.; 2. A photograph was taken of the two of them together. Miss Adler has a copy of the photograph, which threatens to dishonour the king's family.

3. Ask the class how they think the word *blackmail* fits in to the story. Field answers without giving anything away.

#### Listening 2

**Aim:** to listen for detail

1. Tell the class to listen again, this time to complete Holmes's card about Irene Adler and Watson's notes. Let them read the notes first and check their understanding of *current*.

2. Play Track 1 again. While they are listening, copy the notes on the board. When it has finished, invite students to complete the notes on the board. Let the students confirm or correct each other's notes.

**Key:** *Born: New Jersey, USA; Profession: opera singer; Worked in: Milan and Warsaw; Current professional status: retired (still gives concerts); Currently living in: London*

*King wrote letters to Adler; They are not married and there are no legal papers; But she has a photograph that shows them (both) together*

#### Listening 3

**Aim:** to listen for detail to the rest of the chapter

1. Put students in pairs. Ask them to discuss possible answers to the three questions posed in the third listening activity on the worksheet. Give them a couple of minutes for this.

2. Play Track 2.

3. Hand out a copy of the transcript for each student. Give them a few minutes to check their answers. Then, nominate individuals to share answers with the class.

**Key:** 1. Holmes plans to steal the photograph from Miss Adler.; 2. He is going to be married to Princess Clotilde. Her father, the King of Scandinavia, won't allow the marriage if he knows that the king once loved Miss Adler. Miss Adler is threatening to make the photograph public if the King of Bohemia does not marry her.; 3. He needs to know where the king is staying in London and where the lady lives. He also needs lots of money for his plan to succeed.

#### Pronunciation: Connected words 1 (optional)

**Aims:** to raise awareness of liaison (vowel–consonant sound linking between words); to practise listening to and speaking using liaison

1. Ask students to put away the transcripts. They should not look at them for this activity.

2. Put them in pairs. Ask them to look at the fragmented passage on the worksheet. Explain that they need to reorder the text so that all the sentences make sense. The first answer has been given. Elicit the second sentence with the whole class to clarify the instructions.

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3. When they have finished the task, play Track 3 so that they can check their answers. Explain that there are two extra sentences in the story that aren't printed here.

**Key:** 1. 'Mr Holmes, my servants **have**; 2. **already** tried to steal; 3. **it**,' the king said. 'They have tried five times. They **broke**; 4. **into** her house when she was; 5. **out** and searched; 6. **it**. [...] They attacked; 7. **her** carriage on the road and searched her. **It**; 8. **is** a large photograph, but they can never find; 9. **it**. She has hidden; 10. **it** well. And now she wants to **use**; 11. **it** to ruin my life.'

4. Explain that where the text was fragmented, the words can be spoken as if they are one word. Give the first as an example. Write on the board:

my servants have already tried

Say /vɔ:l/ (rhymes with *fall*), indicating on the board the /v/ at the end of *have* linking with the first syllable of *already*. Ask the students to repeat.

Say /vɔ:lredi/ (*already* with a 'v' at the beginning). Ask the students to repeat.

Say *havealready*, running the words together as in normal continuous speech. Ask the students to repeat.

Show on the board the link between *have* and *already*. A common way to do this is to use a symbol like this: have\_already.

5. Tell the class that you are going to say some more linking sounds from the passage. They must identify where in the passage they can be heard. Read out the following sounds, elicit where in the passage they are, then drill the linked words as you did with *have already*:

'zout' (rhymes with out) – 'was out' – 'when she was out'

'zit' – 'use it' – 'now she wants to use it'

'nit' – 'hidden it' – 'She has hidden it well.'

'kin' – 'broke in' – 'They broke into her house'

'dit' – 'find it' – 'they can never find it'

'tit' – 'searched it' – 'and searched it'

'ter' (rhymes with her) – 'attacked her' – 'They attacked her carriage on the road'

'lit' – 'steal it' – 'my servants have already tried to steal it'

'tiz' – 'It is' – 'It is a large photograph'

6. Tell students to get out their transcripts, find the passage and mark the linked words. When they have done this, instruct them to practise saying the passage, paying special attention to the linked words.

### Pronunciation: Connected words 2 (optional)

**Aim:** to further practise speaking using liaison

1. Ask students what they notice about the words that are linked. They should see that liaison tends to occur between a final consonant sound and an initial vowel sound. Ask students to mark the linked words in the second passage on the worksheet.

2. Let them compare the links they have found with those a partner has found. For speed and clarity, it may be best for you to read out the answers.

**Key:** *On\_a bookshelf behind me were the large notebooks\_of Holmes's\_'index'. The books contained notes\_on hundreds\_of people that Holmes was\_interested\_in. The entries were\_arranged\_alphabetically, by name. I took down the first book\_and quickly found the entry that Holmes wanted. I gave\_him the book.*

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### Writing

**Aim:** to explore the motives of Irene Adler

1. Remind the class that Irene Adler has been in contact with the king and ask them what she has told him. Elicit that she has told him that if he does not marry her, she will not let him marry anyone else and, also, that she is prepared to use the photograph if he announces his engagement to another woman. Ask them how they think she told him: by phone? By email? (Answer: *by letter*)

2. Ask them to imagine the letter that she wrote to the king. Ask some questions for them to ponder silently. Read the questions slowly, allowing students to think about each one before continuing:

- How is she feeling about the king?
- What was the last thing he said to her five years ago?
- What did she say to him?
- What does she want to happen?
- Is the king being fair to her?
- Is she being fair to the king?

3. Ask them how they think the letter starts: *Your Majesty? Dear Wilhelm?* Something different? Tell them that they are going to write the letter Miss Adler sends the king. Tell them to work in pairs but to make sure they both have a copy of the letter.

4. As they are writing, be on hand to meet their language needs and to correct errors.

5. When they have finished their letters, regroup the students so that they are with three or four classmates from different pairs: for example, AA BB CC DD EE FF GG HH → ABCD EFGH ABCD EFGH.

While they are moving seats, write on the board:

- Which letter is the most sympathetic to Irene Adler?
- Which letter is the least sympathetic to Irene Adler?
- Which letter is the most passionate?
- Which letter is the funniest?

6. Have them read their letters out loud to one another. As they listen, they should think about the questions on the board.

7. Get feedback from the groups about the questions on the board

### Follow-up tasks

- The students write a letter back to Irene Adler from the king.
- The students prepare a talk for the class about a regret that they have about something they did, or didn't do, or an act of indiscretion on their or someone else's part.

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### Vocabulary

**indiscreet** showing a lack of judgment, especially in talking about things that are intended to be private  
*I would never tell you a secret. You can be so indiscreet.*

**blackmail** to make someone do what you want by threatening to

tell people embarrassing information about them  
*The woman claims she was blackmailed into helping the thieves with the robbery.*

**a forgery** a document, painting, work of art, etc that is a copy of an original and has been illegally represented as the original

*The painting hanging in the gallery was a forgery.*

**honour** the respect that people have for someone who achieves something great, who is very powerful or who behaves in a way that is morally right  
*They were prepared to die for the honour of their country.*

### Listening 1

Listen to the first part of Chapter 2. Answer the questions.

1. What happened five years ago?
2. Why is this a problem now?

### Listening 2

Listen again. Complete Holmes's index card and Watson's notes.

Name: Irene Adler

Born: \_\_\_\_\_

Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Worked in: \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

Current professional status: \_\_\_\_\_

(still \_\_\_\_\_)

Currently living in: \_\_\_\_\_

Client: King of Bohemia

King fell in love with Irene Adler

King wrote \_\_\_\_\_

to Adler

They are not \_\_\_\_\_

and there are no \_\_\_\_\_

But she has \_\_\_\_\_

that shows \_\_\_\_\_

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### Listening 3

Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

1. How will Holmes try to solve the problem?
2. Why is the problem particularly important to the king now, after five years?
3. What will Holmes need, and need to know, in order to help the king?

### Pronunciation: Connected words 1

Put the sentence parts in order to reconstruct a passage from the story. The first has been done for you.

- already tried to steal
- her carriage on the road and searched her. It
- into her house when she was
- is a large photograph, but they can never find
- it to ruin my life.'
- it well. And now she wants to use
- it,' the king said. 'They have tried five times. They broke
- it. She has hidden
- it. [...] They attacked
- 1 'Mr Holmes, my servants have
- out and searched

Listen to check.

### Pronunciation: Connected words 2

Mark the connected words in the following passage.

On a bookshelf behind me were the large notebooks of Holmes's 'index'. The books contained notes on hundreds of people that Holmes was interested in. The entries were arranged alphabetically, by name. I took down the first book and quickly found the entry that Holmes wanted. I gave him the book.

Practise saying the passage, paying attention to connected speech.

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Five years ago,' he began, 'I was in Warsaw, in Poland, for several months. I got to know a woman called Irene Adler there. She was an opera singer. She was very beautiful. I know now that she likes men to fall in love with her. She likes the power that this gives her. But I was a young man then and I did not understand that.'

'Wait one moment, please,' Holmes said. 'Find the entry for Irene Adler in my index, Watson,' he told me.

On a bookshelf behind me were the large notebooks of Holmes's 'index'. The books contained notes on hundreds of people that Holmes was interested in. The entries were arranged alphabetically, by name. I took down the first book and quickly found the entry that Holmes wanted. I gave him the book.

'Irene Adler,' he read. 'She was born in New Jersey, USA. She was the chief female singer of the opera companies in Milan and Warsaw. She has now retired from the opera companies, but she still gives concerts. And I see that she now lives in London.'

Holmes put down the notebook and looked at the king. 'Well, I think I can guess what happened, your Majesty,' he said. 'You were in love with Irene Adler for a while. You wrote her some **indiscreet** letters. And you now want those letters back. Am I right?'

'Yes. But how did you know ...?' the king began.

'Was there a secret marriage?' Holmes went on. 'Is she your legal wife?'

'No,' the king replied. 'There are no legal papers which can link her to me.'

'What is the problem, then?' Holmes said. 'If she tries to **blackmail** you by making the letters public, you can say that they are forgeries. You can say that she has asked someone to steal your writing paper and a sample of your handwriting, and Miss Adler has copied it.'

'If she only had letters, I could say that,' the king replied. 'But she has a photograph too.'

'Anyone can buy a photograph of you,' Holmes said. 'That doesn't prove anything.'

'But we are both in the photograph,' the king said sadly. 'That is the problem.'

'Ah!' said Holmes. 'You have been indiscreet. That is very serious.'

'I was young and I was stupid then,' the king said. 'And I was only a prince. Now I am thirty and I am the king. I must protect my family's honour.'

'Have you tried to buy the photograph back?' asked Holmes.

'Yes, but she will not sell it,' the king replied.

'Well, we must steal it,' Holmes said. 'That is the only way to help you.'

'Mr Holmes, my servants have already tried to steal it,' the king said. 'They have tried five times. They broke into her house when she was out and searched it. They arranged for Miss Adler's luggage to be lost when she was travelling by train. They searched the luggage. They attacked her carriage on the road and searched her. It is a large photograph, but they can never find it. She has hidden it well. And now she wants to use it to ruin my life.'

'How will she do that?' Holmes asked.

Track 1

Track 2

Track 3

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'I am going to be married soon,' the king replied. 'I am going to marry Princess Clotilde, the daughter of the King of Scandinavia. I want her to be my queen. But if her father finds out that I once loved Irene Adler, he will not allow the marriage.'

'I understand. You are going to be married and Miss Adler is jealous,' Holmes said.

'Yes. She has told me that if I do not marry her, she will not let me marry anyone else,' the king replied.

'Why hasn't Miss Adler made the photograph public already?' Holmes asked.

'She is waiting until the day when the date of my marriage is announced to the world,' the king said. 'On that day, the King of Scandinavia will learn about the photograph. And that day will be Monday.'

'That gives us three days,' said Holmes calmly. 'Well, I need to know three things. First, where are you staying in London, your Majesty?'

'At the Langham Hotel,' said the king. 'I am staying there under the name of Count von Kramm.'

'We will contact you there when we have some news,' said Holmes. 'Second, what is the lady's address?'

'She lives in a house in St John's Wood, in north London,' said the king. 'The house is called Briony Lodge.'

'And third, do you understand that I might have to spend a lot of money to get your photograph back?' Holmes said.

'Money is not a problem,' the king replied. 'Spend as much as you need to spend.'

Before he left, the king gave Holmes a bag containing one thousand pounds.

### Glossary

**indiscreet** showing a lack of good judgement, especially in talking about things that are intended to be private

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