

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Petr Kopř



SHERLOCK HOLMES



THE FINAL PROBLEM

SHERLOCK HOLMES

THE ADVENTURE OF



THE FINAL
PROBLEM



**SHERLOCK HOLMES
THE FINAL PROBLEM**

Based on the detective stories
of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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**Petr Kopl presents
a comic book adaptation
of short stories by
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**





Preface



It has been a number of years since I first encountered comics. I cannot even remember the first one. Among these were Foglar's Fast arrows (*Rychlé šípy*), which was read with much excitement in old tattered copies of magazines such as *Mladý hlasatel* or *Vpřed*. It was much later that the *ABC* and *Čtyřlístek* magazines were added to the list. Over time, classic newspaper strips appeared from the USA containing favourite comic book characters such as Peanuts by Charles Schultze, which featured my favourite character, Snoopy. This all happened at some point in the 1970s, by which time I was already deeply engaged with Sherlock Holmes, supported by the various clippings sent to me by fellow Sherlockian and collector from Washington. From then on, my encounters with comics were infrequent, usually only if the genre was of particular interest to me.

However, two years ago, I bought two comics at once—two completely different concepts and adaptations of the same story, probably the best-known detective story in the world today—the Hound

of the Baskervilles. In the first case, it was a completely traditional retelling and artistic rendering of the story. Sherlock Holmes himself did not fare too well. However the second comic was a revelation! It was then I discovered Petr Kopl (*1976) and his world of comics. He has already managed to amass an incredible volume of work. These include his excursions into the world of Anglo-Saxon literature, which I am greatly fond of. They have a slightly ironic and typically Czech approach to the topic and demonstrate his knowledge of the settings. Above all, I respect the work involved in transforming the story into a comic book adaptation.

After our first encounter through the *Hound of the Baskervilles*, I met Petr in person and learned many interesting things about his work. And I learned something new to me—in addition to the comic book adaptations, he also writes and illustrates comic strips. His favourite are the four-window ones, or more precisely in the language of the trade, the four-panel ones.

He has also mastered how to adapt

a literary model and is familiar with the Victorian period.

Unlike many other comic book authors, Petr creates his own script which he breaks down into the bubbles and creates his own drawings. Usually there tends to be two people involved in the creative process. He has fully mastered the art of drawing figures, which is essential for a good result. His approach to the task is highly responsible and he devotes a lot of time to preparation.

He slightly lifts the veil and allows his fans to have a peek at his workshop on his website, and still continues to seek new approaches. His “cartooning” on the following pages uses the watercolour technique, which I personally admire, and I hope that this difficult technique will also be appreciated by his readers.

In the short period of time since our friendship began, I have learned about

comics and found that it is considered to be the ninth art; its origins are old—dating back to ancient Egypt.

You are now holding a comic book by Petr Kopl featuring various Sherlock Holmes cases. He artfully weaves several stories and includes many allusions to others—this time Czech literary works; even his Mucky Pup manages to find a way in.

Finally, I would like to wish you pleasant reading. I firmly believe that The Final Problem will not be the last Sherlock Holmes case from Petr’s hand. I am looking forward to what he will surprise us with next.

Aleš Kolodrubec
President of the Czech Society of
Sherlock Holmes

A member of many foreign Sherlock
Holmes societies

© Aleš Kolodrubec, Prague August 2013



www.SherlockHolmes.cz



Introduction



The Victoria Regina series is comprised of eight books:

- The Phantom of the Opera*
- Sherlock Holmes: The Hound of the Baskervilles*
- Sherlock Holmes: The Final Problem*
- Sherlock Holmes: A Scandal in Bohemia*
- Sherlock Holmes: The Devil's Foot*
- The Lost World*
- Dracula*
- The Mysterious Castle in the Carpathians*

Although these books can be read as stand-alone, the subtext of the stories intertwine, so it is recommended to read them all for better understanding. The good old Czech practice is that the books are not published in chronological order. Therefore we took the liberty of preparing a chronological timeline which shows the beginning of the plot of each comic book. The timeline also shows other comic books by Petr Kopl: *The Barks of Mucky Pup*, *King Arthur*, *Morgavsá and Morgana* and *The Three Musketeers*. These stories are not part of the series; however, the artefacts from these stories appear in the *Victoria Regina* (such as the auction in *Dracula*, a brief episode with a witch in *The Mysterious Castle in the Carpathians*, and the stained glass window at the Baskerville estate, etc.)

The Barks of Mucky Pup — Present

The Mysterious Castle in the Carpathians — 1894

Dr. Watson-Doctor of crime: The Empty House — winter — 1886

Sherlock Holmes: The Final problem — summer - autumn — 1884

Dracula — spring - winter — 1884

The Hound of the Baskervilles — spring — 1884

The Lost world — 1881

Sherlock Holmes: A Scandal in Bohemia — winter - spring — 1880

The Phantom of the opera — 1879

The Devil's Foot — 1876

The Three Musketeers — 1625

Morgavsá and Morgana — 706?

King Arthur — 700?





Dedication:

To Bohouš Dvořák and all the people who, as he does, know the difference between real friendship and true love... which is none...

Petr Kopl





PROLOGUE





LONDON
1ST AUGUST 1884

IT IS WITH A HEAVY HEART
THAT I SEIZE MY DRAWING SET
TO RECORD AS ACCURATELY
AS I CAN, THE FINAL FEW
MOMENTS I SPENT WITH
MY DEAR FRIEND SHERLOCK
HOLMES.



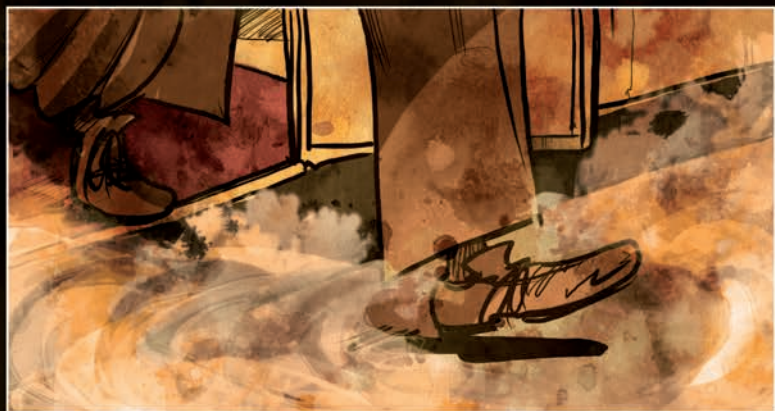
PRESENT DAY
CHARING CROSS

ALTHOUGH I DID NOT WANT TO PUBLISH THIS CASE, THE LETTERS RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY COLONEL JAMES MORIARTY IN THE DAILY PRESS, IN WHICH HE DEFENDS THE MEMORY OF HIS BROTHER, FORCE ME TO LAY THE FACTS BEFORE THE PUBLIC EXACTLY AS THEY OCCURRED.





THE DEPARTURE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES HAS LEFT A VOID IN MY LIFE, WHICH THE TIME THAT HAS SINCE PASSED HAS DONE LITTLE TO FILL.



I SHALL NOT HESITATE TO LAY THE ORIGINAL RECORDS, TAKEN IMMEDIATELY AFTER THAT TERRIBLE EVENT, BEFORE THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC.





I WAS DEEPLY MOVED
BACK THEN.



MAY KIND READERS FORGIVE MY
NUMEROUS TEAR STAINS, WHICH
I WAS SIMPLY UNABLE TO STOP
WHEN ILLUSTRATING THIS CASE.

PRESENT DAY
221B BAKER STREET





IS IT TRUE?

DOCTOR WATSON...



I CAN KEEP A SECRET, YOU KNOW THAT...

PLEASE TELL ME THAT HE'S ON SOME SECRET MISSION ... THAT IT'S JUST A COVER STORY...



PLEASE!



DETECTIVE IS DEAD
Daily Gazette



I COULD NOT UTTER A SINGLE WORD.



AFTER ALL THOSE YEARS OF LIGHTHEARTED ADVENTURE. AFTER ALL THOSE CASES FULL OF DANGER AND MYSTERY...



WHAT WAS LEFT?

