

THE FINAL ADVENTURE

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Adaptation by Glenn Carlson and Scot Crisp

for One Act Audio Theatre

1 INT. NARRATION

1

SFX: MUSIC UP

WATSON: While I have, over the years, chronicled many cases demonstrating the singular gifts of my friend, Sherlock Holmes, I never intended to relate the events surrounding the terrible adventure that ended in such tragedy at Reichenbach Falls. I choose to do so now, not to defend Holmes, whose actions need no defense, but to set straight the terrible perversion of facts as perpetrated in the recent publications of Colonel James Moriarty, who obviously seeks to rehabilitate the reputation of his brother, the criminal mastermind, Professor Moriarty. I alone know the absolute truth of what transpired when Holmes met his arch-enemy face-to-face, and will now lay the facts before the public exactly as they occurred.

WATSON: It may be remembered that after my marriage Holmes and I saw each other a fair deal less. He still called upon me from time to time when he desired a companion in his investigations, but these occasions grew more and more seldom.

WATSON: During the late Winter and early Spring of '91, I received two notes from Holmes, who was engaged upon a matter of some import on behalf of the French government.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 1

WATSON: From these notes I gathered his stay in France would be a lengthy one, and so I was quite surprised to see him walk into my study on the evening of April 24th.

SFX: MUSIC OUT

2 INT. WATSON'S OFFICE -- EVENING 2

HOLMES: Hello, Watson, old friend.

WATSON: Holmes! What on earth --?

HOLMES: I apologize for calling so late.

WATSON: There is no need. Sit down, you are looking rather pale.

HOLMES: Yes, I have been using myself up rather too freely.

WATSON: Some brandy?

HOLMES: Would that be your medical advice, doctor?

SFX: DECANTER AND GLASS

WATSON: Yes, it is as a matter of fact ... Pray, take a seat, Holmes.

HOLMES: Have you any objection to my closing your shutters?

WATSON: None. Is there something wrong?

SFX: SHUTTERS CLOSING

HOLMES: Also, if you would be so unconventional as to allow me to leave your house by way of your back garden, I would be grateful.

WATSON: Holmes, sit, and explain this peculiar behavior.

SFX: CHAIR PULLED UP

HOLMES: (sighs) Is it so peculiar for a man who fears for his life, Watson.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

WATSON: Certainly not. I did not realize the serious nature of this unexpected visit.

HOLMES: I do not wish to bring trouble to this house, my good man, but where else am I to turn?

WATSON: There is no trouble so great that I would turn away my closest and dearest friend.

HOLMES: You are too kind, Watson. But your wife ... she --

WATSON: She is away on a visit. I do not expect her back for a fortnight.

HOLMES: Indeed! You are alone?

WATSON: Quite.

HOLMES: That is fortunate. I am quite sure that I have not been followed here, but not certain. It may prove best if you were to accompany me in hiding for the next several days.

WATSON: Hiding?! Holmes, when have you ever taken to hiding from anything?

HOLMES: Yes, I am not accustomed to such actions ... but in seventy-two hours, the most challenging and dangerous case of my career will be complete, and the terrible threat against my life a mere memory. Until then I, and anyone I am in contact with is in grave danger.

WATSON: From whom?

HOLMES: You have probably never heard of the mathematician, Professor Moriarty?

WATSON: Never.

HOLMES: That's the genius and wonder of the thing. The man pervades London and no one has heard of him.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

HOLMES: For some time now I have been conscious of some power, some deep organizing power at work in our city. For two years I have endeavored to break through the veil which shrouded this mysterious power. At last I came upon a small clue ... I seized this thread and followed it, until it led me, after a thousand cunning windings, to Professor Moriarty.

WATSON: But how could such a man go undetected for so long?

HOLMES: Moriarty is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He sits motionless, like a spider in the center of its web, a web with a thousand radiations, and he knows well the quiver of each of them.

: He does little himself. He only plans, directing his numerous agents like pieces on a chessboard. Should the agent be caught, money appears for his bail or his defense. But the central power which uses this agent is never caught, not so much as suspected. This was the organization I deduced, and which I have devoted all my energy to exposing.

: You know my powers, Watson, and yet at the end of three months I was forced to confess that I had met an antagonist who was my intellectual equal. My horror at his crimes was lost in my admiration at his skill. He is wily, Watson. Never have I risen to such heights, and never have I been so hard pressed by an opponent. Then at last he made a slip -- just a little, little slip -- but it is all I need.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (3)

2

: Moriarty is planning a major seizure of treasury notes, to be shipped by train this coming Monday. To thwart such a theft would be of great public service, of course, but that would not net us the mastermind, only more of his agents. But I am one step ahead of him this time, Watson, for I know that along with the notes in this shipment are items of greater value which will be delivered directly to Moriarty, for he will trust them in no one else's keeping. Once he has exposed himself as culpable in this matter, the police will arrest him. All my carefully documented research has been placed in Scotland Yards hands. They know what must be done, and that patience above all else is called for to lure such a sly opponent into our trap.

WATSON: You do not wish to confront him?

HOLMES: Moriarty knows I am close, Watson, but if he knew exactly how close, he would cancel his plans and all my work will have been for nothing. I will not jeopardize this opportunity. No! I must lay low until the trap is sprung. Besides, he has already confronted me.

WATSON: Really?

HOLMES: Yes! This morning, after the final details were discussed with Inspector Walker, I returned to Baker Street. I was in my rooms playing the violin, trying to clear my mind so as not to dwell on how difficult the next three days would be -- the waiting and inaction -- when suddenly the very man who had been so much in my thoughts was standing there on my threshold, peering at me from behind his hooded eyes.

SFX: MUSIC TRANSITION -- SOLO VIOLIN

3 INT. BAKER STREET SITTING ROOM -- MORNING 3

MORIARTY: You play quite well, Mr. Holmes.

SFX: VIOLIN STOPS

HOLMES: Thank you.

SFX: VIOLIN ON TABLE

MORIARTY: You evidently don't know me.

HOLMES: On the contrary, Professor Moriarty.
Pray take a chair. I can spare you a
moment, if you have anything you wish
to say.

MORIARTY: All that I have to say has already
crossed your mind.

HOLMES: Then possibly my answers have crossed
yours. If there is nothing else --
careful there, Professor!

MORIARTY: Merely my notebook, sir. Ah -- It is
a dangerous habit to finger loaded
firearms in the pocket of one's
dressing-gown.

SFX: GUN ON TABLE

HOLMES: As I said, I do know you, Professor.

MORIARTY: Then you know I keep meticulous
records, Mr. Holmes. I note that you
crossed my path on the 4th of
January. On the 23rd you incommoded
me. By the middle of February I was
somewhat hampered in my plans. At
the end of March your meddling was
seriously inconveniencing. Now, at
the close of April, I find your
continual persecution places me in a
most impossible situation.

HOLMES: Have you any suggestion to make?

MORIARTY: I am quite sure that a man of your
intellect will see that if you pursue
this matter, there can be but one
outcome.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

HOLMES: On that we agree, but as to the
outcome itself, we remain at odds.

MORIARTY: It has been an intellectual treat for
me to see the way in which you have
played our little game of chess. You
hope to beat me ... I tell you that
you will never beat me. You must
drop this, you really must, you know.

HOLMES: Really? Resign the game when I have
you in check?

MORIARTY: You overstate your position. I see
the board clearly, and you have no
other move to make. I will take no
pleasure in your demise, but I tell
you this plainly: You must stand
clear, Mr. Holmes, or be trod
underfoot.

SFX: VIOLIN PICKED UP

HOLMES: I am afraid that our five minutes is
up, Professor. I can no longer
neglect my more important business.
You can see yourself out, I am sure.

MORIARTY: A pity. I have attempted to be
reasonable. If you believe you are
clever enough to bring destruction
upon me, then you know that I can and
will do as much to you.

HOLMES: You have paid me several compliments,
Professor Moriarty. Let me pay you
one in return when I say that if I
were assured of your destruction
then, in the interests of the public,
I would gladly accept my own.

MORIARTY: I can promise you the one, but not
the other.

HOLMES: Good day, professor.

MORIARTY: I believe the more proper word here,
Mr. Holmes, is goodbye.

SFX: FADE OUT FOOTSTEPS TO

4 INT. WATSON'S OFFICE -- EVENING 4

SFX: CLOCK CHIMES HOUR / PIPE NOISES

HOLMES: That was my singular interview with Professor Moriarty.

WATSON: A dark and sinister business, Holmes.

HOLMES: Yes, Watson. And a man such as Moriarty does not let grass grow under his feet. Twice already today have his men attempted assault upon me. A two horse van nearly ran me down on Welbeck Street.

WATSON: I say!

HOLMES: Then on Trendle Lane a brick came falling from the rooftops above, shattering not inches from my feet.

WATSON: These are no mere coincidences.

HOLMES: No. So now you better understand why I closed the shutters upon my arrival and wished to leave your house by some less conspicuous way than the front door.

WATSON: Yes.

HOLMES: Do not look so glum, Watson. Despite his amazing intellect, Moriarty believes that he cannot fail. That is his weakness, and mark my words, it will be his downfall. Still, until Monday, I remain in a precarious position; there are sure to be more attempts upon my life.

WATSON: I see that hiding is a reasonable plan of action, Holmes.

HOLMES: As my presence here is not necessary, I mean to disappear completely for a few days, then return to assist in the court convictions. I would be most grateful if you would consider coming to the Continent with me.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 4

WATSON: Of course! The practice is quiet ...
I have an accommodating neighbor. I
should be glad to come.

HOLMES: Then we start from Victoria Station
tomorrow morning on the Continental
Express at precisely 7:40. The
second first class coach from the
front will be reserved for us. These
are your instructions, and I beg you,
my dear Watson, follow them to the
letter ...

SFX: MUSIC BRIDGE FADE TO

5 INT. VICTORIA STATION -- MORNING 5

SFX: TRAIN STATION WITH CONDUCTOR WHISTLE

PORTER: All aboard! All aboard.

WATSON: Where are you, Holmes?

PORTER: Please board, sir, the train is
departing.

WATSON: Of course. One moment. Has anyone
else boarded this coach?

PORTER: I don't believe so sir.

SFX: CONDUCTOR WHISTLE FOLLOWED BY TRAIN
WHISTLE BLAST

PORTER: All aboard (fade) ...

6 INT. CONTINENTAL EXPRESS COMPARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS 6

Watson enters the train. Slides compartment door back and
takes a seat. He is looking out the window.

WATSON: Come on, Holmes.

In the background we hear a conversation between the
Purser/Conductor and someone speaking broken English with a
French or Italian accent.

PASSENGER: My luggage is checked through to
Paris, yes?

PURSER: Yes, Monsieur/Signore ... here is
your compartment.

PASSENGER: Merci/Grazi

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

Passenger enters compartment.

PASSENGER: Good day, English sir.

WATSON: Um, yes, good day. Excuse me,
purser, this coach is ... I say ...
ah!!

SFX: COMPARTMENT DOOR CLOSES

PASSENGER: A fine day for train, yes?

WATSON: I am sorry, sir, but I am preoccupied
at the moment.

HOLMES: Oh, my dear Watson, it is no wonder
that our European friends complain of
our lack of hospitality.

WATSON: Holmes! Good heavens! How you
startled me!

HOLMES: Please lean back away from the
window, my friend. I have reason to
believe they are hot upon our trail.
Ah, there is Moriarty himself. He
must be very concerned to be here in
person.

SFX: TRAIN PULLING AWAY

HOLMES: You see, even with all our
precautions, we have cut it rather
fine. Have you seen the morning
paper, Watson?

WATSON: No.

HOLMES: You haven't seen about Baker Street,
then?

WATSON: Baker Street?

HOLMES: They set fire to our rooms last
night. I hope the damage is not too
great.

WATSON: Good heavens, Holmes! This is
intolerable!

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

HOLMES: They must have lost my track completely last night, or they would not have returned to Baker Street searching for me. I assume they took the precaution of watching you, however, and that is what has brought Moriarty to Victoria. You could not have made any slip in coming?

WATSON: I did exactly as you advised. My luggage was sent, unmarked, by messenger to the station last night. This morning I took the third random cab to Lowther Arcade, passed through it in a roundabout manner, and found the carriage waiting at the other end as you described.

HOLMES: Did you recognize the coachman?

WATSON: No. But as you'd said, he wore a black overcoat with red tipped collar.

HOLMES: It was my brother, Mycroft ... but perhaps they were watching him, too. Well, no matter. We must plan what we are to do about Moriarty now.

WATSON: This train is an express with a direct connection with the boat. I should think we have shaken him off quite effectively.

HOLMES: Ah, Watson, did you not realize my meaning when I said this man is on the same intellectual plane as myself. You do not imagine that if I were the pursuer I would be baffled by so slight an obstacle?

WATSON: No, not at all. What will he do?

HOLMES: What would I do?

WATSON: Hire a private carriage and engine to follow.

HOLMES: Precisely, Watson, precisely.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (3) 6

HOLMES: This train stops at Cantebury and after that we face a least a half hour's delay with the boat at Dover. He will have time to catch us.

WATSON: Well, then we must ... what, Holmes?

HOLMES: We shall leave the train at Cantebury.

SFX: MUSIC TRANSITION AND UNDER

7 INT. NARRATION 7

WATSON: It was as Holmes said: As we prepared to leave Cantebury Station, Holmes grasped my arm and drew my attention to a thin spray of smoke rising from among the Kentish woods. A minute later a carriage and engine could be seen flying along the open curve which leads to the station. We hardly had time to dash behind a pile of luggage when it passed with a rattle and a roar, beating a blast of hot air into our faces.

WATSON: We then make our way over-land from Cantebury to the port of Newhaven and from there on to Europe -- first to Brussels, then to Strasburg, through Interlaken, and finally to the small Swiss village of Meiringen. It was there, upon our arrival late Monday afternoon, that Holmes received a telegram from Scotland Yard.

SFX: MUSIC OUT

8 INT. MEIRINGEN TELEGRAPH OFFICE -- AFTERNOON 8

SFX: ENVELOPE OPENS

HOLMES: Ahh! I might have known it. He has escaped arrest!

WATSON: Moriarty was not taken?

HOLMES: No. They secured the whole of Moriarty's gang with the exception of him, who is nowhere to be found. I should not have left England!

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

WATSON: We should return immediately!

HOLMES: (pause) Perhaps in a day or so,
Watson.

WATSON: Do you not wish to return and find
him ... to present your case against
Moriarty to the courts?

HOLMES: It is beyond all that now. Moriarty
means to destroy me. That is what he
will desire above all else, now that
his occupation is gone. He said as
much in our short interview at Baker
Street. He will come after me
eventually.

WATSON: What do you plan to do, Holmes?

HOLMES: When he makes his move, I will have
him, Watson.

WATSON: Of course!

HOLMES: And as for now, let us find lodging
for the night. Tomorrow I plan to
enjoy a little mountain air.

SFX: MUSIC TRANSITION

9 EXT. REICHENBACH FALLS PATHWAY -- MORNING

9

SFX: RUSHING RIVER AND WATERFALLS

HOLMES: Ah, the innkeeper was right, Watson,
this is indeed a splendid trek! A
place such as this ... it clears the
mind.

WATSON: It has been quite some time since I
was able to take in such a view.

HOLMES: I should think that just beyond this
bend we shall have a clear view of
the top of the falls.

WATSON: Shall we press on, then?

HOLMES: By all means. After you, doctor.

Watson steps further up the path. Holmes slips and falls on
the trail.

HOLMES: Ahh!!

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

WATSON: Holmes! Are you all right?

HOLMES: I believe so.

WATSON: Let me help you up.

HOLMES: Ahh! Its my ankle. Twisted I am afraid.

WATSON: Sit back. Allow me to look at it.

HOLMES: (laugh) I should prefer to consult you on more serious medical matters. It is a mere sprain. But I fear I will have trouble walking on it.

WATSON: You can lean on me ... I will help you back to the inn.

HOLMES: That would be good of you, Watson, but given the narrow and precarious nature of this trail, I should think it safer to employ the assistance of another. I recall a farmer's house off to the south side, near the trail head. I do believe there you will find a young gentleman of proper ability.

WATSON: Of course. I shall return with help before you know it.

HOLMES: You are a good friend, Watson.

WATSON: I shan't be long, Holmes ... (fade)
Now don't go and try to put any weight on that leg ... you wait until I return ...

SFX: FOOTSTEPS DOWN TRAIL

HOLMES: A good friend.

10 EXT. REICHENBACH FALLS PATHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

10

Holmes rises to his feet and walks up the path.

MORIARTY: Stop there, Mr. Holmes! Ah. I half expected you to be accompanied by that bovine, but no doubt amiable chronicler of your past adventures.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

HOLMES: I am not pleased to deceive Dr. Watson, but I had no intention of risking his life as well as my own. The matter at hand is between us alone, Moriarty.

MORIARTY: Yes, it is. And where better than here to mark the fall of the late, great Sherlock Holmes.

HOLMES: You've come equipped with a revolver this time. You place me at a distinct disadvantage.

MORIARTY: You have intruded into my life for far too long, and I have not the time or patience to continue playing chess with you.

WATSON: (off) Holmes?!

MORIARTY: Our game comes to an end.

HOLMES: You would shoot me, unarmed as I am?

WATSON: (off) Holmes where are you?!
Holmes?!

MORIARTY: This is check ... and mate!

HOLMES: No!

Holmes races at Moriarty. Sound of struggle.

SFX: Pistol shot.

Sound of struggle continues between Holmes and Moriarty.

WATSON: (off, but closer) Holmes!

SFX: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING UP PATH

HOLMES: I believe ... we play to ... a ...
DRAW -- !!

BOTH: Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

Sound of Holmes and Moriarty screams fade as the plunge into the falls.

SFX: MUSIC UP

WATSON: Holmes! Nooooo!!

(CONTINUED)

- 10 CONTINUED: (2) 10
- SFX: MUSIC UNDER & FADE WATERFALL
- 11 INT. NARRATION 11
- WATSON: That is the last I saw of Sherlock Holmes, locked arm in arm with his mortal foe, toppling from the side of the trail and plunging into the swirling cauldron of Reichenbach Falls.
- WATSON: How I came to witness these terrible events is easily told. After I had left Holmes near the top of the falls, I descended down through the river gorge towards the valley. I was fortunate to have quickly met a pair of young Austrians hiking the trail. I explained my need of their assistance and we began to climb back towards the top.
- WATSON: When I came to the place where I had left Holmes, he was not there, but I found his cap and pipe. I was not unduly alarmed until the very next moment when I heard the pistol shot ring out. I ran up the trail only to see my friend topple into the mists, and fall from view into the turbulent waters below.
- WATSON: When I reached the place where Holmes had fallen, I saw the muddy footprints where he and Moriarty had stood, the ruts and marks of their struggle, which ended at the very edge where they had plummeted to their deaths.
- WATSON: There was nothing more to be done. Local authorities interviewed me and the case was quickly closed, after which I returned to London. With Holmes' meticulous notes, Moriarty's gang was convicted, but few facts about their terrible leader came out. It is my hope that this account will set the matter straight.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

WATSON: These are the last words I will
recite about Sherlock Holmes, but
each day as I look upon his cap and
pipe, placed on the mantle in my
study, I will fondly recall the best
and the wisest man I have ever known.

SFX: MUSIC UP

END