

ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES BY SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE I. A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA I. To Sherlock Holmes she is always The woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of his life. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. Was I, take it, the most proper reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen, but as a lover he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. They were admirable things for the observer—excellent for drawing the veil from men's motives and actions. But for the trained reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental results. Grit in the sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his. And yet there was one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable memory. I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other. My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention, while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. He was still, as ever, deeply attracted by the study of crime, and occupied his immense faculties and extraordinary powers of observation in following out those clues, and clearing up those mysteries which had been abandoned as hopelessly by the official police. From time to time I heard some vague account of his doings: of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Treppoff murder, of his clearing up of the sin-gular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee, and finally of the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning family of Holland. Beyond these signs of his activity, however, which I merely shared with all the readers of the daily press, I knew little of my former friend and companion. One night—it was on the twentieth of March, 1888—I was returning from a journey to a patient (for I had now returned to civil practice), when my way led me through Baker Street. As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the Study in Scarlet, I was seized with a keen desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was employing his extraordinary powers. His rooms were brilliantly lit, and, even as I looked up, I saw his tall spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell and was shown up to the chamber which had formerly been in part my own. His manner was not effusive; it seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner. Then he stood before the fire and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion. "Wedlock suits you," he remarked. "I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you." "Seven!" I answered. "Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness." "Then, how do you know?" "I see it, I deduce it. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet lately, and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant girl?" "My dear Holmes," said I, "this is too much. You would certainly have been burned, had you lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I had a country walk on Thursday and came home in a dreadful mess, but as I have changed my clothes I can't imagine how you deduce it. As to Mary Jane, she is incorrigible, and my wife has given her notice, but, obviously, I fail to see how you work it out." He chuckled to himself and rubbed his long, nervous hands together. "It is simplicity itself," said he; "my eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the firelight strikes it, the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts. Obviously they have been caused by someone who has very carelessly scraped round the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in vile weather, and that you had a particularly malignant boot-slitting specimen of the London slavey. As to your practice, if a gentleman walks into my rooms smelling of iodoform, with a black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right forefinger, and a bulge on the right side of his top-hat to show where he has secreted his stethoscope, I must be dull, indeed, if I do not pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession." "I could not help laughing at the ease with which he explained his process of deduction." "When I hear you give your reasons," I remarked, "the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours." "Quite so," he answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair. "You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up to the hall to this room." "Frequently." "How often?" "Well, some hundreds of times." "Then how many are there?" "How many? I don't know." "Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed. By-the-way, since you are interested in these little problems, and since you are good enough to chronicle one or two of my trifling experiences, you may be interested in this." He threw over his shoulder a sheet of thick, pink-tinted note-paper which had been lying open upon the table. "It came by the last post," said he. "Read it aloud." The note was undated, and without either signature or address. "There will call upon you to-night, at a quarter to eight o'clock," it said, "a gentleman who desires to consult you upon a matter of the very deepest moment. Your recent services to one of the royal houses of Europe have shown that you are one who may safely be trusted with matters which are of an importance which can hardly be exaggerated. This account of you we have from all quarters received. Be in your chamber then at that hour, and do not take it amiss if your visitor wear a mask." "This is indeed a mystery," I remarked. "What do you imagine that it means?" "I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. I sensibly begin to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts. But the note itself. What do you deduce from it?" I carefully examined the writing, and the paper upon which it was written. "The man who wrote it was presumably well to do," I remarked, endeavouring to imitate my companion's processes. "Such paper could not be bought under half a crown a packet. It is peculiarly strong and stiff." "Peculiar—that is the very word," said Holmes. "It is not an English paper at all. Hold it up to the light." I did so, and saw a large "E" with a small "g," a "P," and a large "G" with a small "t" woven into the texture of the paper. "What do you make of that?" asked Holmes. "The name of the maker, no doubt; but my monogram, rather." "Not at all. The 'G' with the small 't' stands for 'Gesellschaft,' which is the German for 'Company'; it is a customary contraction like our 'Co.' 'P,' of course, stands for 'Papier.' Now for the 'Eg.' Let us glance at our Continental Gazetteer." He took down a heavy brown volume from his shelves. "Eglow, Eglonitz—here we are, Egria. It is in a German-speaking country—in Bohemia, not far from Carlsbad. Remarkable as being the scene of the death of Wallenstein, and for its numerous glass-factories and paper-mills." Ha, ha, my boy, what do you make of that?" His eyes sparkled, and he sent up a great blue triumphant cloud from his cigarette. "The paper was made in Bohemia," I said. "Precisely. And the man who wrote the note is a German. Do you note the peculiar construction of the sentence—'This account of you we have from all quarters received.' A Frenchman or Russian could not have written that. It is the German who is so uncourtly in his verbs. It only remains, therefore, to discover what is wanted by this German who writes upon Bohemian paper and prefers wearing a mask to showing his face. And here he comes, if I am not mistaken, to resolve all our doubts." As he spoke there was the sharp sound of horses' hoofs and grating wheels against the curb, followed by a sharp pull at the bell. Holmes whistled. "A pair," he continued, glancing out of the window. "A nice little brougham and a pair of beauties. A hundred and fifty guineas apiece. There's more money in this case, Watson, if there is nothing else." "I think that I had better go, Holmes." "Not a bit, Doctor. Stay where you are. I am lost without my Boswell. And this promises to be interesting. It would be a pity to miss it." "But your client—" "Never mind him. I may want your help, an- so may he. Here he comes. Sit down in that armchair, Doctor, and give us your best attention." A slow and heavy step, which had been heard upon the stairs and in the passage, paused immediately outside the door. Then there was a loud and authoritative tap. "Come in!" said Holmes. A man entered who could hardly have been less than six feet six inches in height, with the chest and limbs of a Hercules. His dress was rich with a richness which would, in England, be looked upon as akin to bad taste. Heavy bands of astrakhan were slashed across the sleeves and fronts of his double-breasted coat, while the deep blue cloak which was thrown over his shoulders was lined with flame-coloured silk and secured at the neck with a brooch which consisted of a single flaming beryl. Boots which extended halfway up his calves, and which were trimmed at the tops with rich brown fur, completed the impression of barbaric opulence which was suggested by his whole appearance. He carried a broad-brimmed hat in his hand, while he wore across the upper part of his face, extending down past the cheeksbones, a black vizor mask, which he had apparently adjusted that very moment, for his hand was still raised to it as he entered. From the lower part of the face he appeared to be a man of strong character, with a thick, hanging lip, and a long, straight chin suggestive of resolution pushed to the length of obstinacy. "You had my note?" he asked with a deep harsh voice and a strongly marked German accent. "I told you that I would call." He looked from one to the other of us, as if uncertain which to address. "Pray take a seat," said Holmes. "This is my friend and colleague, Dr. Watson, who is occasionally good enough to help me in my cases. Whom have I the honour to address?" "You may address me as the Count Von Kramm, a Bohemian nobleman. I understand that this gentleman, your friend, is a man of honour and discretion, whom I may trust with a matter of the most extreme importance. If not, I should much prefer to communicate with you alone." I rose to go, but Holmes caught me by the wrist and pushed me back into my chair. "It is both, or none," said he. "You may say before this gentleman anything which you may say to me." The Count shrugged his broad shoulders. "Then I must begin," said he, "by binding you both to absolute secrecy for two years; at the end of that time the matter will be of no importance. At present it is not too much to say that it is of such weight it may have an influence upon European history." "I promise," said Holmes. "And I." "You will excuse this mask," continued our strange visitor. "The august person who employs me wishes his agent to be unknown to you, and I may confess at once that the title by which I have just called myself is not exactly my own." "I was aware of it," said Holmes dryly. "The circumstances are of great delicacy, and every precaution has to be taken to quench what might grow to be an immense scandal and seriously compromise one of the reigning families of Europe. To speak plainly, the matter implicates the great House of Ormstein, hereditary kings of Bohemia." "I was also aware of that," murmured Holmes, settling himself down in his armchair and closing his eyes. Our visitor glanced with some apparent surprise at the languid, lounging figure of the man who had been no doubt depicted to him as the most incisive reasoner and most energetic agent in Europe. Holmes slowly reopened his eyes and looked impatiently at his gigantic client. "If your Majesty would condescend to state your case," he remarked, "I should be better able to advise you." The man sprang from his chair and paced up and down the room in uncontrollable agitation. Then, with a gesture of desperation, he tore the mask from his face and hurled it upon the ground. "You are right," he cried; "I am the King. Why should I attempt to conceal it?" "Why, indeed?" murmured Holmes. "Your Majesty had not spoken before I was aware that I was addressing Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismond von Ormstein, Grand Duke of Cassel-Felstein, and hereditary King of Bohemia." "But you can understand," said our strange visitor, sitting down once more and passing his hand over his high white forehead, "you can understand that I am not accustomed to doing such business in my own person. Yet the matter was so delicate that I could not confide it to an agent without putting myself in his power. I have come incognito from Prague for the purpose of consulting you." "Then, pray consult," said Holmes, shutting his eyes once more. "The facts are briefly these: Some five years ago, during a lengthy visit to Warsaw, I made the acquaintance of the well-known adventures Holmes without opening his eyes. For many years he had adopted a system of docketing all paragraphs concerning men and thing tion. In this case I found her biography sandwiched in between that of a Hebrew rabbi and that of a staff-commander who had sey in the year 1858. Contralto—hum! La Scala, hum! Prima donna Imperial Opera of Warsaw—yes! Retired from operatic st- ng person, wrote her some compromising letters, and is now desirous of getting those letters back." "Precisely so. But I to follow your Majesty. If this young person should produce her letters for blackmailing or other purposes, how is s- r." "Stolen." "My own seal." "Imitated." "My photograph." "Bought." "We were both in the photograph." "Oh, dear! ave compromised yourself seriously." "I was only Crown Prince then. I was young. I am but thirty now." "It must b- tell." "Stolen, then." "Five attempts have been made. Twice burglars in my pay ransacked her house. Once we- "No sign of it?" "Absolutely none," Holmes laughed. "It is quite a pretty little problem," said he. "But a very ser- do with the photograph?" "To ruin me." "But how?" "I am about to be married." "So I have heard." "To Clotilde strict principles of her family. She is herself the very soul of delicacy. A shadow of a doubt as to my conduct w- . And she will do it. I know that she will do it. You do not know her, but she has a soul of steel. She has the fa- should marry another woman, there are no lengths to which she would not go—none." "You are sure that sh- it on the day when the betrothal was publicly proclaimed. That will be next Monday." "Oh, then we hav- atters of importance to look into just at present. Your Majesty will, of course, stay in London fo- on Kramm." "Then I shall drop you a line to let you know how we progress." "Pray do so. I- you that I would give one of the provinces of my kingdom to have that photograph." "And for present ex- table." "There are three hundred pounds in gold and seven hundred in notes," he said. Holmes scribbled a- he asked. "Is Briony Lodge, Serpentine Avenue, St. John's Wood." Holmes took a note of it. "One other questi- nd I trust that we shall soon have some good news for you. And good-night, Watson," he added, as the whee- w afternoon at three o'clock I should like to chat this little matter over with you." "It. At three o'clock precisely- ad left the house shortly after eight o'clock in the morning. I sat down beside the fire, however, with the i- quiry, for, though it was surrounded by none of the grim and strange features which were associated wit- tation of his client gave it a character of its own. Indeed, apart from the nature of the investigation which- n, incisive reasoning, which made it a pleasure to me to study his system of work, and to follow the quick- was I to his invariable success that I never really perceived his failing had ceased to enter into my head. It w- whiskered, with an inflamed face and disreputable clothes, walked into the room. Accustomed as I w- s certain that it was indeed he. With a nod he vanished into the bedroom, whence he emerged in five mi- tched out his legs in front of the fire and laughed heartily for some minutes. "Well, really!" he cried, an- , in the chair. "What is it?" "It's quite too funny. I am sure you could never guess how I employed my- g the habits, and perhaps the house, of Miss Irene Adler." "Quite so; but the sequel was rather unus- of a groom out of work. There is a wonderful sympathy and freemasonry among horse men. Be one- with a garden at the back, but built out in front right up to the road, two stories. Chubb lock to the do- those preposterous English window fasteners which a child could open. Behind there was nothing- alked round it and examined it closely from every point of view, but without noting anything else of intere- hich runs down by one wall of the garden. I lent the ostlers a hand in rubbing down their horses, and rece- information as I could desire about Miss Adler, to say nothing of half a dozen other people in the neighb- d to listen to." "And what of Irene Adler?" I asked. "Oh, she has turned all the men's heads down in that p- ews, to a man. She lives quietly, sings at concerts, drives out at five every day, and returns at seven sharp- male visitor, but a good deal of him. He is dark, handsome, and dashing, never calls less than once a d- ntag- es of a cabman as a confidant. The y had driven him home a dozen times from Serpentine-mews, an- p and- down near Briony Lodge once more, and to think over my plan of campaign. "This Godfrey Norton- ed omin- us. What was the relation betw- een them, and what the object of his repeated visits? Was she hi- ferred the p- otograph to his keeping? If the latter, it was less likely. On the issue of this question depende- u see my little- e gentleman's cham- bers in the Temple. It was a delicate point, and it widened the field of my- urove up to Brion- difficulties, if you are t- o understand the situation." "I am following you closely," I answered- ny Lodge, and a gentl- eman sprang out. He was a remarkably handsome man, dark, aquiline- eat hurry, shout ed- to the cabman to wait, and brushed past the maid who opened the doo- our, and I could- catch glimpses of him in the windows of the sitting-room, pacing up and- ng even more flur- ried than before. As he stepped up to the cab, he pulled a gold watch fr- egent Street, and d- then to the Church of St. Monica in the Edgeware Road. Half a guinea i- low them when- up the lane came a neat little landau, the coachman with his coat only h- n't pulled up b- efore she shot out of the hall door and into it. I only caught a glimpse- ca, John- 'she cried, 'and half a sovereign if you reach it in twenty minutes.'- behind- her landau when a cab came through the street. The driver looked t- ch of St. Monica," said I, 'and half a sover- ign if you reach it in twenty minutes.' It was twenty-five minutes to tw- e fast, I don't think I ever drove faster, but- the others were there before us. The cab and the landau with their ste- d into the church. There was not a soul t- here save the two whom I had followed and a surprised clergyman, who- ront of the altar. I lounged up the side ai- s like any other idler who has dropped into a church. Suddenly, to my s- as hard as he could towards me. "Thank- ank God," he cried. "You'll do. Come! Come!" "What then?" I asked. "Come- ar, and before I- new where I was, I- found myself mumbling responses which were whispered in my ear, and vouch- Irene Adler, spinster, to Godfrey Norton, bachelor. It was all done in an instant, and there was the gentleman thank- ront. It was the most preposterous position in which I ever found myself in my life, and it was the thought of it that- ense, that the clergyman absolutely refused to marry them without a witness of some sort, and that my lucky appe- . The bride gave me a sovereign, and I mean to wear it on my watch-chain in memory of the occasion." "This is a v- menaced. It looked as if the pair might take an immediate departure, and so necessitate very prompt and energetic- and she to her own house. I shall drive out in the park at five as usual," she said as she left him. I heard no more- "Some cold beef and a glass of beer," he answered, ringing the bell. "I have been too busy to think of food, and- elighted." "You don't mind breaking the law?" "Not in the least." "Nor running a chance of arrest?" "Not in a good- is it you wish?" "When Mrs. Turner has brought in the tray I will make it clear to you. Now," he said as he turned- e. It is nearly five now. In two hours we must be on the scene of action. Miss Irene, or Madame, rather, returns fr- e already arranged what is to occur. There is only one point on which I must insist. You must not interfere, come w- tness. Do not join in it. It will end in my being conveyed into the house. Four or five minutes afterwards the sitting-r- le to you." "Yes." "And when I raise my hand—so—you will throw into the room what I give you to throw, and will, at t- ped roll from his pocket. "It is an ordinary plumber's smoke-rocket, fitted with a cap at either end to make it self-ignit- d of the street, and I will rejoice you in ten minutes. I hope that I have made myself clear?" "I am to remain neutral, to get ne- of the street, and I will rely on you." "That is excellent. I think, perhaps, it is almost time that I prepare for the new role I have to p- lay." He disappeared into his bedroom and returned in a few minutes in the character of an amiable and simple-minded Nonconformist clergyman. His broad black hat, his baggy trousers, his white tie, his sympathetic smile, and general look of peering and benevolent curiosity were such as Mr. John Hare alone could have equalled. It was not merely that Holmes changed his costume. His expression, his manner, his very soul seemed to vary with every fresh part that he assumed. The stage lost a fine actor, even as science lost an acute reasoner, when he beca- me a specialist in crime. It was a quarter past six when we left Baker Street, and it still wanted ten minutes to the hour when we found ourselves in Serpentine Avenue. It was already dusk, and the lamps were just being lighted as we paced up and down in front of Briony Lodge, waiti- ng for the coming of its occupant. The house was just such as I had pictured it from Sherlock Holmes' succinct description, but the locality appeared to be less private than I expected. On the contrary, for a small street in a quiet neighbourhood, it was remarkably animated. There w- as a group of shabbily dressed men smoking and laughing in a corner, a scissors-grinder with his wheel, two guardsmen who were flirting with a nurse-girl, and several well-dressed young men who were lounging up and down with cigars in their mouths. "You see," remarked Holm- es, as we paced to and fro in front of the house, "this marriage rather simplifies matters. The photograph becomes a double-edged weapon now. The chances are that she would be as averse to its being seen by Mr. Godfrey Norton, as our client is to its coming to the eyes of his pri- ncess. Now the question is, Where are we to find the photograph?" "Where, indeed?" "It is most unlikely that she carries it about with her. It is cabinet size. Too large for easy concealment about a woman's dress. She knows that the King is capable of having her waylaid and search- ed. Two attempts of the sort have already been made. We may take it, then, that she does not carry it about with her." "Where, then?" "Her banker or her lawyer. There is that double possibility. But I am inclined to think neither. Women are naturally secretive, and they like to do their- own secreting. Why should she hand it over to anyone else? She could trust her own guardianship, but she could not tell what indirect or political influence might be brought to bear upon a business man. Besides, remember that she had resolved to use it within a few days. It must- be where she can lay her hands upon it. It must be in her own house." "But it has twice been burgled." "Pshaw! They did not know how to look." "But how will you look?" "I will not look." "What then?" "I will get her to show me." "But she will refuse." "She will not be able to. But I m- be where she can lay her hands upon it. It must be in her own house." "But it has twice been burgled." "Pshaw! They did not know how to look." "But how will you look?" "I will not look." "What then?" "I will get her to show me." "But she will refuse." 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