

5 The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes
12 by Arthur Conan Doyle (copyright 1892)

16 A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA

17 I.

32 To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the* woman. I have seldom heard him mention her
49 under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It
67 was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one
81 particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He was, I
97 take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen, but as
114 a lover he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer
129 passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. They were admirable things for the observer—
143 excellent for drawing the veil from men's motives and actions. But for the trained
156 reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament
171 was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental
187 results. Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses,
205 would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his. And yet there
222 was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and
224 questionable memory.

240 I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other.
254 My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the
269 man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all
283 my attention, while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian
297 soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and

311 alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug,
329 and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. He was still, as ever, deeply attracted by the
341 study of crime, and occupied his immense faculties and extraordinary powers of
355 observation in following out those clues, and clearing up those mysteries which had been
370 abandoned as hopeless by the official police. From time to time I heard some vague
388 account of his doings: of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Trepoff murder, of his
403 clearing up of the singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee, and finally of
416 the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning
430 family of Holland. Beyond these signs of his activity, however, which I merely shared
447 with all the readers of the daily press, I knew little of my former friend and companion.

465 One night—it was on the twentieth of March, 1888—I was returning from a journey to
482 a patient (for I had now returned to civil practice), when my way led me through Baker
497 Street. As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my
514 mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the Study in Scarlet, I was seized
530 with a keen desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was employing his
546 extraordinary powers. His rooms were brilliantly lit, and, even as I looked up, I saw his
563 tall, spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room
579 swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest and his hands clasped behind him. To
596 me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He
614 was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams and was hot upon the
632 scent of some new problem. I rang the bell and was shown up to the chamber which had
638 formerly been in part my own.