



The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure III – A Scandal in Bohemia

Publishing History

#3 of the 60 stories written

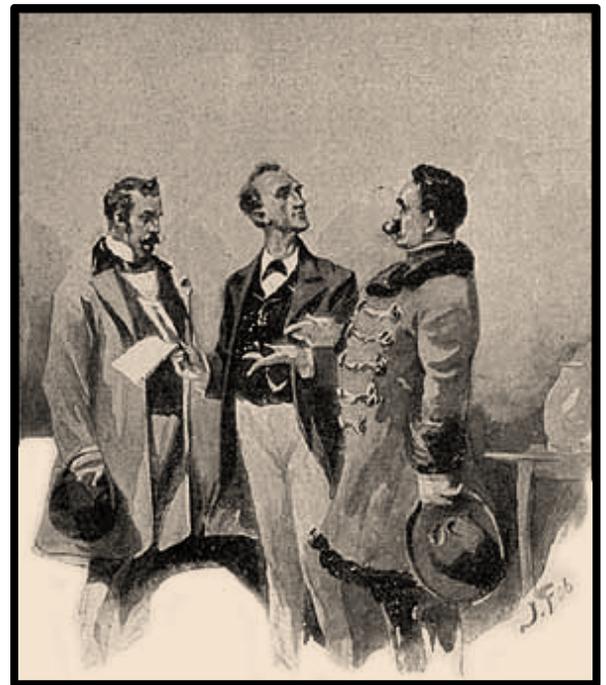
First published in *The Strand Magazine*, July 1891.

Part of the New York Edition of *The Strand Magazine* in August, 1891, was syndicated in 7 newspapers across the U.S. **before** *The Strand Magazine*. They often changed titles so *Woman's Wit* and the *King's Sweetheart* in another.

Part of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* collection George Newnes, Ltd., London, 1892 Harper Bros., New York, 1892. The British illustrator was Sidney Paget (his first Sherlock story)

Chronology

William Baring-Gould places the date as Friday,, May 20 to Sunday,, May 22, 1887, which makes it the 9th of the 60 in time. This means that Holmes is 33 and Watson 35.



Christopher Morley Says

“The first in a long series of shorter tales, and one of the most charming. Holmes relieves the King of Bohemia from an embarrassment, but finds the American prima donna Irene Adler more attractive than the royal client he is serving. Holmes outwits her first, but she retaliates brilliantly. He refuses to shake hands with the King of Bohemia and keeps Irene’s photograph as a souvenir. Perhaps the only evidence of romantic sentiment in the great detective’s career.”

Dummies Short Summary

“Hired to thwart a public scandal involving the king of Bohemia, Holmes encounters the beautiful Irene Adler, who, as he puts it, “has the face that a man might die for”.”

How Many Words

At 8,599 words SCAN has the 36th most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 if NAVL – 12,701).

Classifying This Case

This case is one of 2 classified as fear of physical harm or public scandal. The other is 3STU.

The Best Of Sherlock Holmes

One of the most judged stories and the first of a series meaning that there will be more Sherlock coming.

- 1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle list it as 5th on list of 12 favorites.
- 1944 – Baker Street Irregulars voted it as #2 on their top 12 favorites.
- 1954 - Baker Street Irregulars voted it as #3 on their top 12 favorites.
- 1959 – Baker Street Irregulars voted it #5 on their top 10 favorites.
- 1999 – Sherlock Holmes Society of London rated it 3rd of the 56 short stories.

What Else Happened That Year (1887)

- British East Africa Company charter awarded.
- Victoria's Golden Jubilee, end of Windsor Retirement.
- Irish Coercion Act; Irish Land Act.
- Coal Mines Regulation Act, boys under 13 not to work underground, and under 12 at the surface.
- United States begins free mail delivery to homes of any community with a population of 10,000 or more.
- Renewal of Russo-German 'Reinsurance' Treaty; and Triple Alliance.
- Italian force annihilated by Ethiopians at Dogali;
- Union of Indo-China formed by France.
- Yellow River floods in China, killing nearly a million people.
- U.S. Interstate Commerce Act, federal control of interstate railways.
- Conan Doyle's A Study in Scarlet, first Sherlock Holmes story, published.
- H. Rider Haggard publishes She and Allan Quartermain.

- Verdi debuts Othello.
- Radio waves discovered by Hertz.
- Daimler four-wheeled motor car produced.

Holmes And Watson – Personal Information

Holmes occupies 221B alone as Watson has married, moved-out, and they have much less “adventure” to share.

Dramatis Personae

Irene Adler only appears in this stories, but Sherlockians have been talking about her since.

- **The King Of Bohemia aka Count Von Kramm**, Bohemia was never a kingdom
- **Clotilde Lothman**, fiancée of the King and Princess of Scandinavia.
- **Irene Adler**, *The Woman*, Watson calls her “The Later Irene Adler” does not mean she was deceased by the time the story appeared in 1891, it probably means the change of the marital status and subsequent name change.
- **Godfrey Norton**, a prominent young attorney, engaged to Miss Adler.
- **Mrs. Turner**, Holmes’ landlady (in EMPT original manuscript “Mrs. Turner” is written and crossed out for Mrs. Hudson).
- **Mary Jane**, Watson’s servant girl.

Quotable Sherlock

- To Sherlock Holmes she is always “the woman.” (actually it is Watson quoting Holmes)
- “He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen.” (also Watson – describing Holmes)
- “You see, but you do not observe.”
- “It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data.”
- “There’s money in this case, Watson, if there is nothing else.”
- “I am lost without my Boswell.”
- “She is the daintiest thing under a bonnet on this on this planet.” “So say the Serpentine-mews, to a man.”
- “I only caught a glimpse of her at the moment, but she was a lovely woman, with a face that a man might die for.”

- “The bride gave me a sovereign, and I mean to wear it on my watch-chain in memory of the occasion.”
- “The stage lost a fine actor, even as science lost an acute reasoner, when he became a specialist in crime.
(from Watson)
- “Women are naturally secretive, and they like to do their own secreting.”

Holmes’ Fee

Holmes: “Then, as to money?” King: “You have carte blanche.” The King also gives Holmes £300 in gold and £700 in notes up front for expenses. (This equals £67,000 today) Not shabby for a couple day’s work. Plus the photograph.

Disguises

This is the story where Holmes’ talent with disguises makes its first appearance. And Holmes becomes both a drunken-looking groom and a non-conformist clergyman. But not everyone is fooled by him.

Unrecorded Cases

More details that we will never know and, thusly, become frustrated.

- His summons to Odessa in the Trephoff murder
- The singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee
- A mission he had accomplished so delicately for the reigning family of Holland
- The Darlington substitution scandal
- The Arnsworth castle business

Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen

- 1921 *A Scandal in Bohemia* with Eille Norwood as #7 of the 47 20 minute movies based on the canon but not Victorian. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes #7*: The National Film and Television Archive at the BFI has viewing copies of this film but.
- 1983 Russian Series - *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson*, *The Treasure of Agra* episode blended with STUD and starring Vasily Livanov.
- 1984 *A Scandal in Bohemia* with Jeremy Brett in the *Sherlock Holmes* series
- 2012 *A Scandal in Belgravia* with Benedict Cumberbatch in *Sherlock*.

Annotated Sherlock

A Scandal in Bohemia is loaded with words no longer in general use. Many will be seen in the other stories.

- **“It came by the last post.”** In downtown London, in Holmes’ and Watson’s day, there were as many as 12 postal deliveries a day, and in Baker Street there were 6. On Sundays there was no postal service, thus it was necessary to hire a Commissionaire or other special messenger.
- **“cabinet”** was a photograph of 3 7/8 5 ½ inches in size. “carte de visite” and “boudoir” are smaller sizes
- **“an ordinary plumber’s smoke rocket”** Device once used by plumbers to check for leaks in drains.
- **“a spirit case or tantalus”** is a stand containing usually three glass cut decanters, which, though apparently free, cannot be removed without the bar that engages the stoppers is raised. Many such have a padlock to the bar to avoid “tantalizing” the servants.
- **“a gasogene”** is a device that produces sparking soda water (seltzer).
- **“mews”** Short streets or alleys behind London’s main thoroughfares, originally referring to the stabling of horses.
- **“half and half”** A drink: half ale and half porter or other bitter beer.
- **“nitrate of silver”** a compound once used for decontamination of water
- **“Boswell”** James Boswell, often referred to as simply Boswell, friend and biographer of Samuel Johnson .. 9th Laird of Auchinleck (October 29, 1740 - May 19, 1795)
- **“chubb lock”** -- became the sole supplier of locks to the General Post Office and a supplier to Her Majesty's Prison Service . . . they designed a special secure display case for the Koh-i-Noor diamond for its appearance at The Great Exhibition.
- **“ostler”** One who is employed to tend horses, especially at an inn.
- a **“surpliced”** clergyman -- a loose-fitting, broad-sleeved white vestment, worn over the cassock by clergy and choristers
- . . . **“ulster”** a long, loose, heavy overcoat, originally of Irish frieze, now also of any of various other woolen cloths.
- **civil practice** -- Watson has been a medical officer in the British Army; following his marriage in the previous Holmes adventure, The Sign of Four, he moves out of the rooms at 221B Baker Street which he shared with Holmes, and begins a non-military (“civil”) medical practice.
- **four-wheeler** -- an enclosed carriage with four wheels and doors on both sides; the driver usually sat in the front on top.

- **Non-conformist clergyman** -- all Protestant groups who choose not to associate themselves with England's official Anglican church are called "non-conformist."
- **spirit case** -- a cabinet filled with flasks containing various distilled liquids and solutions.
- **sally** – rush out.
- **"Inner Temple"** -- The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple is one of the four Inns of Court around the Royal Courts of Justice in London which may call members to the Bar and so entitle them to practise as barristers. (The other Inns are Middle Temple, Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn.)

Is There A Doctor In The House?

Victorian London, in the Holmes' time, had approximately one doctor for every 100 people. 31 of the 60 tales have a doctor in them. This, of course, does not count Holmes' Boswell. This listing is by Leslie Klinger in the Winter, 2015 edition of the *Baker Street Journal*. Whether it was Doyle or Watson, a doctor wrote the story. In this story there was no doctor involved or mentioned.

Weapons

There are very few things that can be found in this story.

- **Sticks** - Of some of the personae in Holmes' staged brawl outside Irene Adler's home.
- **Addenda - Fists** - Of some of the participants in Holmes' staged brawl outside Irene Adler's home, one of which supposedly struck Holmes (disguised as a kindly old non-conformist minister)
- **Photograph** - Taken, of the King of Bohemia with Irene Adler (its content makes for some interesting speculation), which "The Woman" threatened to send to the King of Scandinavia, whose daughter the impudent Bohemian was about to marry, unless she got satisfaction.

Another Interesting Fact / Or Whatever?

Perpetual Puzzles Populate the stories – in *STUD 221B* had a landlady. In *SIGN* she was called Mrs. Hudson. In *SCAN* we have Mrs. Turner. Who the heck is Mrs. Turner?

Frank Mentzel