THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

by

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ADVENTURE 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 her sex. 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. He was, I take it, the most perfect

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 a

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 but one woman to him, and

that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable

memory.