



The Detective and The Woman: A Novel of Sherlock Holmes

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Irene Adler, American opera singer and the one woman who outsmarted Sherlock Holmes, finds herself a widow at thirty-two, wealthy but emotionally broken. At the same time, Sherlock Holmes finds himself unable to return to England after faking his death at Reichenbach Falls and is drawn into an investigation of two men with designs on a woman they call Miss A, who is none other than Irene Adler herself. The Detective and The Woman throw their lot in together to uncover a dangerous plot with implications that stretch across the Atlantic. In the process, they meet legendary inventor Thomas Edison and experience life in Florida at the turn of the 20th century.

The Detective and The Woman: A Novel of Sherlock Holmes Details

Date : Published April 16th 2012 by MX Publishing

ISBN : 9781780921433

Author : Amy Thomas

Format : Paperback 220 pages

Genre : Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction



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From Reader Review The Detective and The Woman: A Novel of Sherlock Holmes for online ebook

Gia says

3.75 stars.

Interesting read. Bittersweet ending.

Sherry says

A short little novel that incorporates Irene Norton, nee Adler, and Sherlock Holmes in a case not long after his supposed demise at Reichenbach Falls. A short little ditty of a story with no frills. Kind of at the other end of the spectrum from the novels written by Carole Nelson Douglas which use Irene Adler Norton and her side kick as the main characters.

James says

this would be a 5-star book had the mystery been a tad stronger... otherwise Amy Thomas gets Sherlock Holmes and his world near perfectly... her writing has the proper tone and voice and language and mannerisms and feel, just exquisite! one could almost think this book was penned by Doyle himself, much like the Holmes books by Horowitz... i love how Irene Adler is such a huge part of the tale, in some ways larger than Holmes, though maybe because more can be fashioned for her since Holmes is so well-fleshed from his tales... regardless, so many little things to like about this book, short as it is (which works well, as Doyle's short stories were in ways absurdly simple in their complexities), but full of emotion and action and parrying by The Detective and The Woman... highly recommended...

Kim says

November 1, 2012: I am so excited to read this book! I love Sherlock Holmes, but even more about the woman should share the glory!

November 16, 2012: I very much enjoyed this short mystery. What a great story teller! It was easy to read, enticing mystery, and great characters. Thank you, Amy! I look forward to more by this author.

Kristen says

Nope. This absolutely did not work for me, but not because of the writing.

I bought this as an audio book, and that was a mistake. The narrator did the Sherlock voice with an American

accent. I can't even imagine how any narrator could possibly think it would fly with a listener to hear Sherlock Holmes speak with anything BUT a British accent. I found it jarring and distracting just wrong every time she spoke his part. I could not get past that, and simply could not continue listening to the book.

To be fair, my issue is not related to the writing or the story. If I were reading this rather than listening to it, it is entirely possible that I would have really enjoyed it, and I may give this another go in the future as a traditional book. It was absolutely not for me as an audio book, however, and that was the format I had it in so it is a "no" for me for now.

Monica says

Very well written book; the author has managed to keep both Irene Adler and Holmes in character. At first I worried this book may be a silly intent on romance but my worries were unfounded. Here, "the women" is rather a substitute for Watson. I thought the case would be much more complex but at the end it was rather simple, much in the vein of ACD less ambitious short tales. In summary, a fun, short read. And I just loved that end!

Elizabeth Varadan says

I seldom have time to read a book more than once, but this was such a satisfying mystery, I had to read it twice—the first time for the story, the second time for the sheer pleasure of the writing. The detective of the title is Sherlock Holmes. The woman is Irene Adler, who outsmarted him in *A Scandal in Bohemia*, lingering in Sherlock's mind ever after (according to Dr. Watson) as "the woman".

Sherlock's brother, Mycroft, sends him to Florida after coming across an enigmatic message signed Barnett to someone in Florida named Sanchez. The message refers to Miss A, newly widowed and sailing for Florida. The tone of the message suggests her life may be in danger. The Holmes brothers have figured out "Miss A" is Irene Adler.

When the book opens, Irene has arrived in Florida and is on tour, re-starting her singing career after her husband's heart attack freed her from an abusive marriage. Sherlock attends a performance and visits her backstage. He shows her the cryptic note, convincing her to team up with him so they can track down Barnett and Sanchez and foil their plan. Disguised as Bernard James, a British investor, and his American wife, Lavinia, they take a train to Fort Myers. (Sherlock has learned Alberto Sanchez from Central America has a profitable citrus outside of the town.)

These are not the only false identities they will assume. And, as the plot thickens, it turns out quite a few characters are not who they seem. Meanwhile, Thomas has done her research and creates a convincing Fort Myers of the late 1890's, from hotels and rooming houses, to migrant workers in citrus groves to mansions of the few wealthy residents. (Thomas Edison and his wife are their host more than once, and a reader is treated to a description of what it was like to view in his lab an early Kinetoscope, an early device to show moving pictures.)

The story unfolds through alternating viewpoints that work very well—first person for Irene Adler, a stage performer who sings with emotion and passion; distant third person for Sherlock Holmes, always

emotionally somewhat removed, while his intellect tries to unravel the plot against her. The plot has lots of turns and twists to keep a reader immersed—and surprised—with a believable resolution.

The relationship between Irene and Sherlock, suspicious on both sides at the beginning, develops into one of mutual admiration and respect. They find they work well together. More adventures are to come: *The Detective and the Woman, A Novel of Sherlock Holmes*, is the first of a series.

Angela Misri says

Reading these stories by Amy Thomas feels like milling through guests at a party and running into old friends - with all the joy and excitement that comes with it. The friends in this case are Holmes and Adler, and they are written with such respect and depth that you can't help but feel you are rejoining the well-told canon on a newly discovered case. Conan-Doyle created The Woman and gave her a remarkable personality that stands the test of time. Thomas takes those beginnings and develops Adler further, giving her a vulnerability and core of strength only hinted at in the original canon. I can't wait to read the next book in this series and hope Amy Thomas continues to write such compelling mysteries!

Kristen says

I confess I'm not an expert on Holmes but I have read at least half of the stories so I have more than a cursory familiarity with Conan Doyle's great detective and this was not him. *The Detective And The Woman* read like a cozy mystery, which in and of itself was readable but would have been better if it had had novel characters. Instead it felt like the author did a lot of name dropping and made references to Holmes stories to force her characters to resemble Conan Doyle's but I just didn't buy it.

Philip Jones says

This novel begins with Irene Adler Norton looking at the corpse of her husband, Geoffrey Norton, who died of a heart attack. The new widow turns to the only other life she knows and embarks on a concert tour in her native America. Next, Sherlock receives directions from his brother, Mycroft to leave his refuge in Venice, after the affair of the Reichenbach, to sail for the new world with sealed orders. Sherlock and Irene meet at her concert in Orlando, Florida under Mycroft's direction.

This is the beginning of their second meeting and their first collaboration. Succeeding events involve both with Thomas Edison and his family, with prominent citizens of Fort Myers and with the minions of Colonel Sebastian Moran. The mystery is complex and is not easily dealt with by the duo. Issues of trust cloud their partnership with each of them hiding important data from the other. Their Florida acquaintances must be deceived about their identities and they must forge a working relationship in the midst of lies and deceit on all sides.

This is not a typical Sherlockian pastiche. Mycroft is the client and he is sparing with information. Irene is forced to cooperate by the machinations of Mycroft and Sherlock is obliged to remain dead to society to allow the capture of the remains of Moriarty's mob. The environment is alien to the detectives, both of

whom yearn for quiet and seclusion. The ‘case’ is obscure and clues are sparse while mysteries abound. Irene is emotionally bruised by her marriage and her widowhood while Holmes is recovering from his supreme effort to remove “The Napoleon of Crime.” Both know that they are being fed a poor diet of information and neither can trust their partner for support, more or less for truth.

The mystery remains impenetrable for most of the narrative. Chapters are written alternately from the viewpoint of Holmes or of Irene. Only the reader understands the doubts and reservations each feels about their collaboration and no one seems to know all the facts. I spent the entire ‘read’ dreading a romance ending with Sherlock and Irene waltzing off into the sunset to a Sigmund Romberg tune, but it simply doesn’t happen. The principals are both too guarded and too afraid of exposure to become lovers. Instead, they work their way into a friendship that is based on their own interests and abilities. The mystery is well-handled and its outcome is logical without being easily discerned. The characters are all well presented and interesting without being distracting or artificial. Since many are taken directly from life, they live their lives in front of the reader without fuss or fury, but only with their own natures and inclinations.

The editing is often a problem in first time pastiches, but this author seems to have side-stepped many of the traditional problems. The spelling and grammar are better than I could have done with only one or two minor problems. There are two continuity errors, both of which require special knowledge. All discussions of buildings use the American layout of first, second, third, etc... floors, which is reasonable as most of the events occur in America. The problem is that both Holmes and Irene have lived on the Continent for years and both are accustomed to the European usage of ground, first, second, etc... floors. It is conceivable that whoever notionally amassed the source material merely used a common choice to avoid mixed usage. The other problem occurs when the activities of Irene’s solicitor are described and he is accused of having a radio. The device itself is simply not available in 1893 and that name for it is the product of a later date and culture.

Beyond this, the book is entertaining, puzzling and a lot of fun. I believe the author has hit on the only type of long-term relationship possible for Sherlock Holmes and Irene Adler. The details of the narrative only add force to the romantic defects we expect in both of them and their growth and development are truly marvelous to watch. This is not a love story. Instead, it is a coming-of-age tale starring two of our favorite characters.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, April, 2012

Note: The original review posted here was for another book. MY ERROR!!!!

Thomas Turley says

This well-written pastiche, the first in a successful trilogy, reunites Sherlock Holmes and Irene Adler, The Woman who defeated him in “A Scandal in Bohemia,” during The Great Hiatus. Like W.S. Baring-Gould in his “biography” of Holmes, Ms. Thomas clears the way by disposing of the husband Miss Adler acquired in the original story. However, the similarities end there. Instead of encountering his beautiful nemesis at an opera house in Montenegro, Holmes tracks her down—at the behest of Brother Mycroft—in Fort Myers, Florida (Ms. Thomas’s home town). They join forces to protect Holmes’ life, and Irene’s fortune, from a plot engineered by her devious attorney and the vengeful Colonel Moran. While the mystery itself is rather thinly plotted, there is much to like about this novel. The Fort Myers setting is enlivened by the presence of

Thomas Edison and other real-life residents. Ms. Thomas's depiction of Ms. Adler builds convincingly upon the character created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. She also does well by Sherlock Holmes, although the situation in which he finds himself is far outside his usual milieu. It is also nice that Ms. Thomas resists the temptation to rush the pair into an immediate romance. Rather, she allows their relationship to evolve from initial mistrust to grudging cooperation to mutual regard. An epilogue, which runs through 1903, may be harder to reconcile with the traditional picture of the Great Detective's later life. It will be interesting to see how Ms. Thomas proceeds to tell that story in her sequels.

Dale says

The return of Irene Adler!

My thanks to Steve and Timi at MX Publishing for my review copy of this book. May Undershaw stand forever as a beacon in remembrance of the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle!

Possible spoilers, but I really strive only to whet the appetite...

Irene Adler, you may recall, was married to Godfrey Norton at the end of "A Scandal in Bohemia." Now it seems that their marriage turned out badly. Unfortunately, Godfrey Norton proved to be a cruel man who married Irene for her fortune. Unknown to her, Godfrey had inherited a large estate which required her fortune to keep it shipshape.

Godfrey Norton died suddenly of a heart attack, and Irene was again free. She went back to her singing career, successfully turning cities in the United States. Her latest engagement is in Orlando, Florida, where she runs into Sherlock Holmes...

Holmes is supposed to be dead, killed at Reichenbach Falls. But Mycroft has discovered a plot against Irene Adler, by the duo of her lawyer James Barnett and would-be citrus grove magnate Alberto Sanchez. So Sherlock Holmes is dispatched to Florida to renew his acquaintance with The Woman...

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, the first in a series by Amy Thomas starring Sherlock Holmes and Irene Adler. The plot has many twists and turns and is full of intrigue, danger, and a budding relationship between two former foes...

I give the book five stars!

Quoth the Raven...

Leah says

After her experiences with the King of Bohemia, Godfrey Norton, any number of men in her past, and even Sherlock Holmes, Irene is not in a trusting mood. Holmes' difficulties with women are well-documented. Still, they're able to put their doubts about one another aside (sometimes with difficulty) in the interests of solving the case. Their efforts lead them into both the highest echelons and lowest dregs of Floridian society,

requiring quite a few costume changes, acting skills and outright subterfuge. Irene finds this last often difficult—particularly when it is directed at her. The plot has so many twists and turns that it's actually hard to tell you much more than this without venturing into Spoilerville. Just remember, nothing is what it seems. Unless it is.

Many would argue that one of the reasons Sherlock Holmes has stayed popular for over a century is that his gas-lit, Victorian-on-the-cusp-of-Edwardian London carries a mystery, familiarity and poignancy that still fascinates. However, like many of us, Ms. Thomas couldn't just spend months in London to soak up the atmosphere and get all the buildings right. So she wisely chose to set her story in the Ft. Myers area of which she has intimate knowledge. She does a good job of integrating its history and prominent people into the book. I was worried, for instance, when Thomas Edison made an appearance (the Edisons wintered in Ft. Myers). But he blended in quite well, and there was no magical invention to serve as deus ex machina in the final moments of the adventure. At the same time, she avoids the temptation of having every other scene scream, "Look! Sherlock Holmes is in America!" No quirky characters, no allusions to Disney, no gratuitous mentions of US politics, no funny dialects.

Ms. Thomas does an excellent job of parcelling out information on a need-to-know basis. Even though the reader spends half of the adventure in Holmes' head, the detective remains secretive, and even when I was fairly sure I had it all figured out, I still had one surprise coming. In the end, however, the reader has to accept that the elaborate plot was necessary for the villain to achieve his ends, and that Holmes would be willing, so early in the Hiatus, to blow his cover. I can accept that the culprit would want to exercise that level of control over his plot, and the author does address the latter issue, but these are two instances in which you may need to play along.

Finally, of course, there are the characters. Irene Adler is a polarizing character to many, and the idea of her having any sort of relationship with Sherlock Holmes even more so. I was very happy with the way Ms. Thomas portrays The Woman. Here, she's not a vixen, not a thief, and not, thankfully, a Mary Sue. She's a regular woman emerging from an experience that challenged her every notion of who she is; most readers will be able to identify with her reactions and concerns. Her greatest strength is her ability to keep her head in trying circumstances. This is useful, not only when someone is holding a gun to the head of the woman next to you, but also when Sherlock Holmes is trying to explain why he didn't tell you a rather important aspect of his plan—one that concerned you. Forced once more into trying circumstances due to others' machinations, Irene Adler finds herself acting as Watson. She does a fair job, but in the end, it's not a role she relishes. Holmes is always a tricky character; everyone seems to have a different view of him. This detective is, perhaps, a bit softer than others, but not by much. He's not a misogynist at all, just a regular man bewildered by women's more emotional reactions to life. In one priceless scene, for example, he thinks about how one of Watson's bad moods could be easily short-circuited with ale and a pork pie, and doubts that would work with his new partner. He finds Irene a useful companion, someone intelligent to bounce ideas off of, but he's not sure how far he can trust her, or of her ability to fulfill the assignments he gives her. In his other aspects—his facility with costumes, his faculty for working for days without rest, his quick reasoning and ability to sacrifice others' interests to solve a case—he is the Holmes we all recognize. I did feel that, so soon after Reichenbach, there might have been a little more exploration of his thoughts and feelings on that split-second decision and all of its ramifications. He misses Watson, compares him (generally favorably) to Irene, but there's less of this than one might think. And, as I mentioned before, he didn't seem nearly as concerned about others learning his identity as might be expected. It could be argued, however, that Holmes' ability to bury disturbing feelings under the weight of logic kept him sane during the Hiatus, and helped him become the Great Detective, so these are only minor caveats.

Ludditus says

I don't know what classes of creative writing has this Amy Thomas followed, but the result is underwhelming. Alternating Holmes' and Irene's standpoints is unspectacular, as the story simply goes on without any overlapping or twist: it's just a segment that's seen from his eyes, the next one through hers, and so on. Besides, the first and the third person are used inconsistently: all the Irene chapters are using "I," but the Holmes chapters are always "Holmes did this," "he did that." Preposterous.

The beginning is even a bit ridiculous with statements such as "The detective's corpulent brother..." and "The tall detective unfolded himself..." .

The involvement of Thomas Edison is more than far-fetched, but there is a bit of a careful timing. Conan Doyle kills Holmes at the Reichenbach Falls in "The Final Problem," published in 1893, but the story is set in 1891. The Kinetoscope (copied by Edison in 1889 from a patent of the French inventor Louis Le Prince), was first shown as a prototype in 1891, and publicly demonstrated in 1893. Quite conveniently, I'd say.

Much less studied was the synchronicity of other inventions. Consider this: "He probably also preserved the appearance of his presence in London—having his paper brought in, his office lights turned on and off, his radio used, perhaps even going so far as to hire a stand-in." The radio didn't exist back then: the first public radio broadcast took place on Christmas Eve 1906. Furthermore, and especially in Britain, for the next few decades it was called "wireless," not radio.

OK, that one was an oversight, but structurally, Irene's thoughts, attitude and behavior were the most unconvincing assumptions. After all, Irene is the most important character of the novel, not Holmes. And the most implausible too.

And this is not all there is. The last fifth of the book is simply unneeded. Chapters 17 to 20 could be simply skipped without loss of any kind. If anything, this would spare the reader of the ridiculous ending (I try not to insert spoilers, but think of something rather romantic on the countryside). Ludicrous is too kind a word for the entire plot.

Amy Perry says

One of the better pastiches I've read, Holmes remains in character, the romance is subtle and Irene is a force to be reckoned with. The plot moves quickly and is interesting. A good read.
