

Outdone by the woman



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Outsmarted By The Woman Who would have ever thought that the great Sherlock Holmes would be wrong from time to time? Certainly not any fan of the series of stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Doyle's A Scandal In Bohemia proves this to be untrue. A Scandal In Bohemia is a Sherlock Holmes story that is different from most others. This particular tale, contrary to many of the other Holmes stories, does not involve a crime. Even more unusual, Sherlock Holmes is not only wrong about his conclusions and deductions; he is actually outdone by a seemingly sweet and innocent woman named Irene Adler. Throughout the story, Arthur Conan Doyle uses many examples of foreshadowing as well as other literary devices to keep the reader guessing. Through the use of these devices, Mr. Doyle keeps the reader in suspense and always wanting more. While reading the story for the first time, it is hard to pick up on some of the literary devices that Doyle uses. It is not until it is read over and perhaps over again that one can finally notice these hints that Doyle is giving the reader. An example of this would be the use of foreshadowing. Throughout the story, there are many instances in which Sir Arthur Doyle uses foreshadowing to forecast what is going to happen later in the story. The first appearance of foreshadowing occurred in the first line of the entire story. "To Holmes, she will always be the woman" (1). At first glimpse, one would most likely not understand the meaning of this. However, after reading a few times, the reader would realize that this woman, the woman, is given this title because of events that occur much later in the story. Another good example of foreshadowing occurs towards the end of the story, before the resolution is unveiled. "Irene Adler, as I will still call her, had hurried up the steps; but she stood at the top with her superb figure outlined against the lights of the hall, looking back

into the street" (185). This quote is spoken by Watson, and he is describing Irene Adler. When first reading this paragraph, it is hard to determine why Watson would mention her name and then say something like "as I will still call her." After reading the conclusion of the story, it is easy to see why Mrs. Adler is known as the woman. A final example of foreshadowing comes near the end of the story. "Good-night Mr. Sherlock Holmes" (212). "'I've heard that voice before', said Holmes, staring down the dimly lit street" (214). It was at this instant where I, as the reader, finally was able to make an association between all of the examples of foreshadowing. I realized that this voice that he heard was the voice of the sweet Mrs. Adler. Later we find out that this was part of her predetermined plan to get the better of Sherlock Holmes. Although foreshadowing is the main literary device used, there is also the use of metaphor that builds suspense. A good first example of one of the metaphors that Doyle uses is also the first line of the story. "To Sherlock Holmes, she is always the woman" (1). Describing Miss Adler as "the woman," not only foreshadows events that are to come, but it also lets the reader know that this woman is special to Holmes. It makes the reader come on to predetermined conclusions about this woman who has not been introduced yet. Metaphorically speaking, a statement such as "the woman," could be interpreted in many different ways. For one, at some point, Mr. Holmes could have been involved with this woman, or had some kind of intimate relationship with her. However this theory is soon dismissed. "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"(1). It could also be interpreted that this woman has done something to Holmes in which he will never forget. Although this proves to be the case, it certainly cannot be foreseen by the

reader that this woman is one of the few, and probably the only woman, to get the better of Sherlock Holmes. Another instance of metaphor occurs later in the story. Holmes has just witnessed the marriage of Irene Adler.

Afterwards, he and Watson are conspiring on how to get the letter. Holmes insists to Watson that the letter now could hurt both the King as well as Mrs. Adler. "" You see," remarked Holmes, 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 princess. Now the question is, Where are we to find the photograph?" (172). The metaphor occurs when the letter is described as a double-edged weapon. This adds suspense to the story because it makes the reader think about what really is going to happen next. It brings up the rhetorical question: If she is now married, then what does it matter that she has the letters? At the end of the story, the reader finds out that she only wants to hold the letters now in order to secure herself from future attempts by the King to steal the letter. In conclusion, Sherlock Holmes has proven to be one of the greatest fictional detectives of all time. A Scandal In Bohemia is a very unique story in which Sherlock Holmes was not only wrong, but in fact gotten the better of by a very admirable and worthy adversary. Mr. Doyle has a very unique way of telling stories, and is able to make a reader think about what he/she is reading. From start to finish, with use of literary devices, Mr. Doyle keeps the reader in suspense. By doing this, he almost forces the reader to come up with his/her own conclusions and deductions about how the story is going to unfold.