

The Adventures
of
Sherlock
Holmes

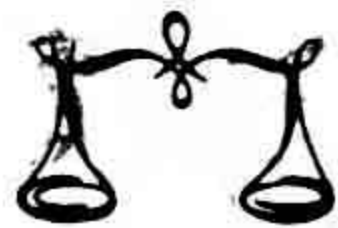
Arthur Conan Doyle



ed classic tales

**The Adventures
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Sherlock
Holmes**

Arthur Conan Doyle



adapted classic tales

Olive Eckerson
formerly of Glendale High School
Glendale, California

Wallace R. Murray
formerly of San Jose State University
San Jose, California

Illustrations by Ned Glattauer

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**The Adventures
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About the Author

Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Scotland in 1859. He was interested in medicine and after finishing medical training set up his own practice. Among his favorite authors were Edgar Allan Poe, the first detective story writer, and Wilkie Collins. Collins was the father of the English horror story.

To please his wife, Doyle began to think about writing a detective story. He remembered the writings of Poe and Collins and set himself to follow in their footsteps. Doyle wanted his master detective to be striking in appearance. The detective would have to be very clever, absolutely fearless, and have an unusual manner. Above all, he must be a man with a special charm of his own. But Doyle felt he also needed someone to tell the stories. And he decided that it ought to be a doctor, like himself. And so Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson were born.

Thus began the writing career of Arthur Conan Doyle. When his first stories appeared in the *Strand Magazine*, there were no great books on criminology (the study of crime). Doyle had to depend on his powers of deduction and observation to solve the problems he created for Holmes.

By 1890, Doyle had given up medicine to devote himself to writing. Soon he was famous. The tall, lean figure with the peaked cap and pipe, answering to the name Sherlock Holmes, was known almost everywhere. Doyle had intended to write only six stories, but the public would not let him drop Holmes and Watson. But drop Holmes he did. When people read of the supposed death of Holmes and his enemy Moriarty at the foot of Reichenbach Falls, (see page 70) they were stunned. But Doyle remained firm. Later Doyle gave in—a little. He wrote a play called *Sherlock Holmes*. The play was a huge success both in England and in America.

In 1899, England was at war in South Africa. Doyle decided to enlist. He got an appointment as an army doctor. The king wanted to reward Conan Doyle by making him a knight. At first Doyle refused. But eventually the soldier-author became Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. At the age of 43 he was the world's most popular writer. Still he refused to bring Holmes "back to life."

Finally, in the spring of 1903, he gave in. Doyle wrote "The Adventure of the Empty House" and Holmes returned to his eager fans.

In 1907, Doyle married again. To please his new wife, he wrote several more Holmes stories. When World War I broke out, Doyle again volunteered. After the war, Sir Arthur began to study spiritualism. He continued to write and went on several speaking tours. In July, 1930, Arthur Conan Doyle died. His memory will live forever in the immortal characters of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson.

Adapter's Note

In preparing this edition of THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, the author's main purpose has been kept in mind. Since the stories were originally published, however, language has changed. We have modified or omitted some passages and some vocabulary in the stories. We have, however, kept as much of the originals as possible.

Preface

Almost everyone in the world is familiar with the famous detective Sherlock Holmes. Tall and thin, his sharp face alert, his manner quiet and mysterious, Holmes met some of the worst criminals of his time. And he beat them.

Sherlock Holmes and his friend Dr. John Watson were created by Arthur Conan Doyle almost 100 years ago. Until the appearance of Holmes, the detective story was not popular. The first real detective story was published by Edgar Allan Poe in 1841. It was called "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." The first full-length detective novel was written by Wilkie Collins. It was called *The Moonstone*. Arthur Conan Doyle used many of the features of both stories. But Doyle went on to create the most famous detective in the literary world.

Without the aid of a central fingerprint file, mug books, telephones, blood typing, computers, or ballistics experts Holmes solved many difficult problems. He depended mostly on his powers of observation and reasoning. And the record of many of his cases has been left by his friend, Dr. Watson.

Not only will you find the action, mystery, and occasional horror that Dr. Watson recorded, but you will also find some good, exciting stories.

Read how Holmes and Watson first met. Follow them as Watson records, and according to Holmes, exaggerates, these interesting cases. And enjoy their often hair-raising adventures.

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A Word From Doctor Watson

My Dear Friends:

My only claim to fame is through my long and close friendship with the famous detective, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Had it not been for him, the world would never have heard of me. I should have passed a quiet and uneventful life as a doctor, practicing my profession in Kensington, at the west end of London.

It was rather by chance that I first met Holmes. I began my career as an army doctor and went out to India, where my work and almost my life were at once cut short by a nasty wound. For some weeks I lay in a base hospital, and was well on my way to recovery. Then I was struck down by an attack of tropical fever that nearly killed me. When I could travel, I was sent home and soon was discharged from the army. Having no relatives at all, I went to live in a small hotel in London.

But my money was fast running out, and I thought I must look for cheaper lodgings. Here fate took a hand. On the very day that I decided this, I ran into Stamford, another doctor. As we chatted, I learned that a friend of his, a man called Sherlock Holmes, was then working in the chemical laboratory of the hospital. He was looking for someone to share rooms with him. He did not have much money, either, so we were both in the same fix.

And that was how it all began. A meeting was arranged, and my friend, Stamford, told me a few things about Holmes. But I was really not prepared for the unusual personality of the man who was to become my closest friend. Stamford said that Holmes was a cold-blooded scientist. When we entered the laboratory where he was working, he struck me as anything but that.

I saw a figure bending over a Bunsen burner who looked up as we entered and shouted, "I've got it! I've got it!" He turned and fairly ran toward us with a test tube in his hand. It seemed that he had succeeded in some small experiment with human blood. But if he had discovered a rich gold mine, he could not have been more delighted.

I eyed him curiously. He was very tall, over six feet, and so thin that he appeared to be much taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing. His thin, hawklike nose gave him the appearance of alertness and decision. His chin was square and firm. All in all, he was a most distinguished looking man.

We were introduced and shook hands. His grip showed astonishing strength, but later on I was to see those thin hands engaged in the most delicate tasks. He immediately informed me that I had lately been in Afghanistan, and at my blank look, he chuckled. Then I thought Stamford must have told him, but such was not the case. I soon learned that Holmes possessed peculiar powers of observation which enabled him to know many things about a stranger at first glance.

We took rooms at 221B Baker Street. After we moved our things, we settled down to bachelor life. I was still not very strong, and never went out in bad weather. Instead, I spent my time in studying my new friend.

I found he had a keen mind, which he used only for certain things. He was not interested in literature, history, or politics, and not very much concerned with the usual sciences. In fact his knowledge of science was strangely limited. He knew a great deal about the human body and had a deep understanding of chemistry. His knowledge of plants was confined almost entirely to a study of poisons, about which he seemed to know everything. He was fascinated by crime literature. He knew every detail of every horror that had been committed within the last hundred years. He played the violin very well, and proved to be an excellent swordsman and boxer. And this about covered the formal education of Sherlock Holmes.

His habits were curious. He was fearfully untidy. Holmes loved to work in a litter of books and papers, while sending up clouds of tobacco smoke from a strong-smelling pipe. His methods of working, however, were neat and careful. His interest in crime led him to choose odd friends. One of them was a Mr. Lestrade, a pale, rat-faced fellow, who called frequently to see him. Lestrade was an inspector of homicide with the police force of Scotland Yard.

As other strange people would call on Holmes, he very often gave me astonishing details about them which he could not possibly have known beforehand. On first meeting people, Holmes could tell their occupations, general health, what part of the country they came from, whether or not they were married, and what they had most recently done. At first I thought he was guessing, but later I knew he was drawing careful conclusions from accurate observation.

Although I began to build up my practice, and saw a few patients every day, my chief interest was in the movements of my companion. I began to keep diaries and journals of his work. When he solved the mysteries of *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four*, I kept careful notes. I intended someday to publish a book of these adventures. More and more I neglected my work to help Holmes. Frequently I accompanied him on his strange trips in and about London. He never went armed and depended on me to use my service revolver and my skill as a shot that I learned as an army officer. Had I not fallen in love and married, I might have given up my own work entirely. This made it necessary for me to leave Holmes and settle down to my own profession.

Holmes stayed on at our old rooms in Baker Street, buried among his books and chemical instruments. He continued to assist the local police in clearing up crimes that they could not solve, and I saw very little of him. Now and then I heard that he had gone abroad, to Russia or Holland, for example. His name would often be linked with some sensational crime which he cleverly solved. He began to be famous

at home and abroad, and won the respect of both the London and Paris police.

Occasionally he would call on me and persuade me to take a brief holiday with him somewhere in England or on the Continent. My wife would go to visit her relatives, and I would go off with Holmes, always on the track of some criminal, where we both would take risks that we had no right to take. I was a married man, happily living with a wife whom I dearly loved. Holmes was fast becoming the foremost champion of the law of his time. Neither of us could well be spared. Still, we continued to have adventures in which we usually were successful.

Much to Holmes's amusement, I wrote careful accounts of all of his cases. They later were published under such titles as *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, and *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes*. He used to declare that for a doctor, I was most unscientific, and that I allowed my emotions to run away with me too often when writing of him.

Was Holmes ever in love? I doubt it. He was not fond of women, although his treatment of them was courteous and gentle, even when the women proved to be the blackest of criminals. I did not often hear him refer to his relations, but he did tell me a good deal about his brother Mycroft, who was seven years older than he. Holmes admired his brother immensely. He always said that Mycroft would make a much better detective than himself, were it not for the fact that his brother was so lazy that he preferred sitting in an armchair and thinking about a case rather than going out and doing something about it.

One night I met Mycroft at his club. I found him even stranger than his brother Sherlock. He was immensely fat and took snuff from a tortoise-shell box, brushing away the grains from his enormous front with a scarlet silk handkerchief. A short conversation with him and Sherlock convinced me that what the latter had said was quite true. Mycroft was

the more brilliant of the two brothers. Occasionally he would bestir himself to assist Holmes in a case, but only when, by so doing, he could save his brother's life.

When my dear wife died I had no heart for medicine. I sold my small practice in Kensington, and went back to live with Holmes in Baker Street. There I lived until my second marriage, when I left Holmes for good. He continued to work on his amazing cases until early in the twentieth century, when he announced his retirement. He then went to live on his farm near Eastbourne, where he nursed his rheumatism and studied agriculture.

I cannot close this little account without some mention of Mrs. Hudson, the long-suffering landlady who looked after our rooms in Baker Street. She was a Scotch woman of strong common sense and iron nerves who grew used to the strange procession of weird characters that passed through her house.

She would be roused at any hour of the night to admit tramps, sailors, women in distress, or gentlemen with staring eyes and wild faces who demanded to see Sherlock Holmes immediately. She became quite used to seeing Holmes departing or arriving in any one of his brilliant disguises. Sometimes he would be made up as an old crippled woman, or a bearded foreigner. At other times he would be a fat priest or a withered bookseller. Mrs. Hudson was always equal to the occasion. She was a remarkable woman.

In this little book I have recorded for your entertainment a few of the most interesting and exciting of the dozens of cases that Holmes, with my humble assistance, was able to solve. There were dozens more that I never had time to write down.

I hope you enjoy reading about my friend. I begin with Holmes's own favorite, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band."

Yours sincerely,
John H. Watson, M.D.

The Adventure of the Speckled Band



I was sharing rooms with my friend Sherlock Holmes in Baker Street at the time that these horrible and extraordinary events took place. I remember it was in April, 1883, that I awoke one morning to see Holmes standing, fully dressed, by my bedside. As it was only a quarter past seven, I was surprised to see him, for he was usually a late riser.

“I’m sorry to wake you, Watson,” said Holmes. “But there is a young lady who insists on seeing me. Mrs. Hudson is already up, and rather grumpy, if you ask me, at having to leave her bed at this hour.”

“I thought it must be nothing less than a fire to get you up,” I said.

“No, Watson, no fire. But something quite as exciting, I fancy. When young ladies wander about the city at this hour

of the morning and get sleepy people up, they must have something important to tell. I thought you would not want to miss it.”

I would not have missed it for anything, and lost no time in getting on my clothes and following my friend downstairs to the sitting room. There we found a young lady, heavily veiled, and dressed in black, who rose as we entered.

“Good morning, madam,” said Holmes cheerfully. “My name is Sherlock Holmes, and this is my intimate friend and associate, Dr. Watson. You may speak as freely before him as before myself. I see Mrs. Hudson had had the good sense to light the fire. We shall soon have a cup of coffee for you, for I see you are shivering.”

“It is not cold which makes me shiver,” said the woman in a low voice.

“What, then?”

“It is fear, Mr. Holmes. It is terror.” She raised her veil as she spoke, and we could see that her face was all drawn and gray, and her eyes were those of a hunted animal. Although she seemed a woman of about thirty, her graying hair made her look much older. Holmes gave her a quick glance.

“You must not fear,” he said, speaking gently, and patting her arm. “We shall soon set matters right. You have come by train this morning, I see.”

“Do you know me, then?”

“No, but I observe the second half of a return ticket in the palm of your left glove. You must have started early, for the drive you took in a dogcart was a long one, over muddy roads.”

The lady gave a violent start and looked bewildered.

“There is no mystery, dear madam,” said Holmes, smiling, “the left arm of your jacket is spattered with mud, and the marks are fresh. Only a dogcart throws up mud in this way, and then only when you sit on the left-hand side of the driver.”

“You are quite right,” said she.

The lady then told us that she had started from home before six o'clock, taking the first train to Waterloo Station.

"I can stand this strain no longer. I shall go mad if it continues. I have heard of you, Mr. Holmes, from Mrs. Farintosh, whose problem you solved. Oh, sir, do you not think you could help me, too?" she asked.

"I cannot pay you anything now," she said. "But in six weeks I shall be married, with the control of my own income, and then you will not find me ungrateful."

"I ask no payment whatever," said Holmes. "All I ask is that you pay any expenses that might occur while we are working on your case. And now, perhaps you will give me the details, so that I may form an opinion of the matter."

"That is just the trouble," said the lady. "I have no definite information, that is, nothing that might lead to a solution of my problem. I only know that I am terribly afraid, and when I turn to the one person who might be able to comfort me, he puts me off with soothing words, and does not believe anything I tell him. He says I am just a nervous woman. But, Mr. Holmes, it is more than that, I assure you."

"I am listening, madam."

The lady then told us a strange story of her family.

"My name," she said, "is Helen Stoner, and I am living with my stepfather, Dr. Roylott, who is the last survivor of the Roylotts, one of the oldest families in England."

"I have heard of them," nodded Holmes.

"Although at one time the family was immensely wealthy, by the end of the last century, most of the wealth had been gambled away by heirs, who lived only for pleasure. Dr. Roylott's father dragged out a horrible life there, on the family estate, and my stepfather determined that he would not spend his life in this way.

"So he borrowed money, took a medical degree, and went out to India, where he obtained a large practice, for he was a clever doctor. But in a fit of anger over some robberies that had taken place in his house, he beat his native butler to