



May 15-June 15, 2024

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Sonja Lowe- Production Dramaturg

## The Setting

PLACE: Various locales in London  
(including 221B Baker Street)

TIME: Last 1890s.



# The Story-teller: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

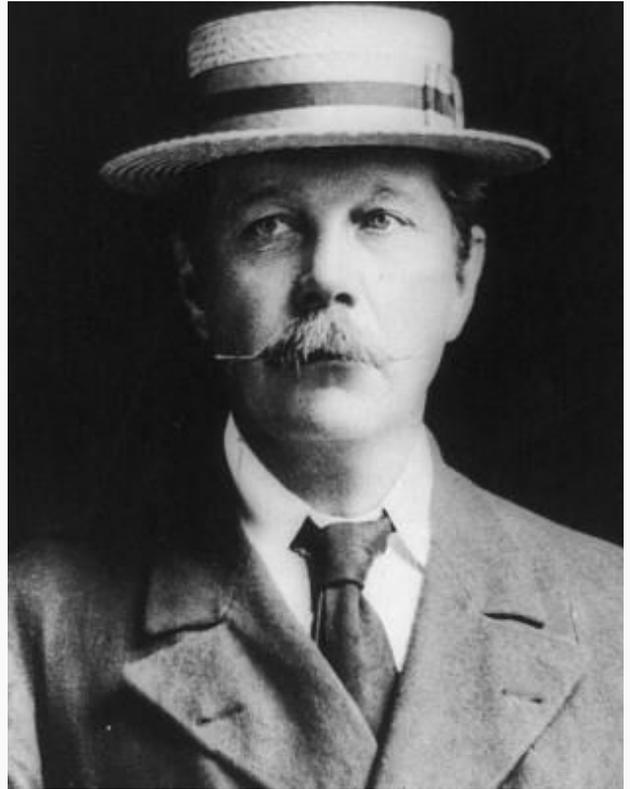
Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) was a Scottish writer best known for his creation of the detective Sherlock Holmes—one of the most vivid and enduring characters in English fiction.

Conan Doyle, the second of Charles Altamont and Mary Foley Doyle's 10 children, began seven years of Jesuit education in Lancashire, England, in 1868. Through the influence of Dr. Bryan Charles Waller, his mother's lodger, he prepared for entry into the University of Edinburgh's Medical School. He received Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery qualifications from Edinburgh in 1881 and an M.D. in 1885.

While a medical student, Conan Doyle was deeply impressed by the skill of his professor, Dr. Joseph Bell, in observing the most minute detail regarding a patient's condition. This master of diagnostic deduction became the model for Conan Doyle's literary creation, Sherlock Holmes, who first appeared in *A Study in Scarlet*, a novel-length story published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual of 1887*.

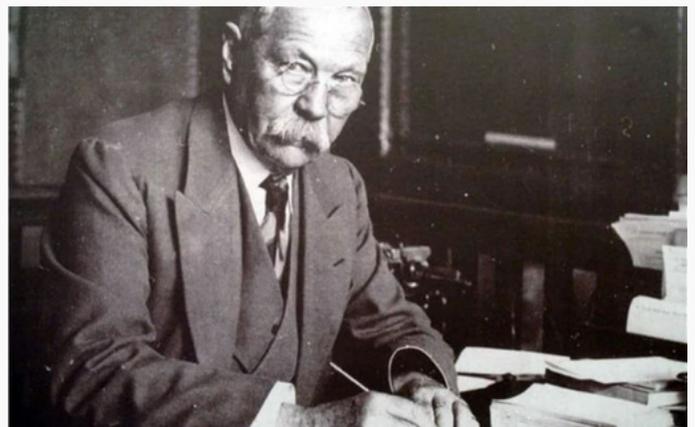
Driven by public clamour, Conan Doyle continued writing Sherlock Holmes adventures through 1926. His short stories were collected in several volumes, and he also wrote novels (e.g., *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, serialized 1901–02) that feature Holmes and his assistant, Dr. Watson. Conan Doyle, however, claimed the success of Holmes overshadowed the merit he believed his other historical fiction deserved, most notably his tale of 14th century chivalry, *The White Company* (1891), its companion piece, *Sir Nigel* (1906), and his adventures of the Napoleonic war hero Brigadier Gerard and the 19th-century skeptical scientist Professor George Edward Challenger.

When his passions ran high, Conan Doyle also turned to nonfiction. His works included military writings, *The Great Boer War* (1900) and *The British Campaign in France and Flanders*, 6 vol. (1916–20), and subjects such as the Belgian atrocities in the Congo during Leopold II's reign, in *The Crime of the Congo* (1909), as well as his involvement in the actual criminal cases of George Edalji and Oscar Slater.



Conan Doyle married Louisa Hawkins in 1885, and together they had two children, Mary and Kingsley. A year after Louisa's death in 1906, he married Jean Leckie and with her had three children, Denis, Adrian, and Jean. Conan Doyle was knighted in 1902 for his work with a field hospital in Bloemfontein, South Africa, and other services during the South African (Boer) War.

Resource: Wilson, Philip K. "Arthur Conan Doyle." Encyclopedia Britannica. Updated May 14, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arthur-Conan-Doyle>



# The Playwright: Margaret Raether

Margaret Raether has a career as a graphic artist, webmaster, playwright, and performance artist by night. She is artistic director of the Artists' Ensemble in Rockford, IL. and along with her husband, are founding members.

Raether pours her thoughts into the keyboard during evenings and weekends. She creates characters — their worries, their fears, their shortcomings — and uses that inspiration to write their dialogue. Many of her lines are written with local actors in mind, as Raether imagines her words being spoken aloud.

And then, when she heads to the theater to see her words transformed onto the stage, Raether sits back and watches the audience soak up her story.

"It is immensely gratifying to have a whole room full of people burst into laughter at something that came out of my head," she said. "Once I discovered that I could do this, I became addicted."

## What inspires you to do what you do?

I've been stage-struck since the age of 14 when I was cast in the junior high musical. In my yearbook cast photo, I stood next to some runty kid who only came up to my shoulders. Some years later, after he grew a foot and we re-met in college, I married him. Together, we lived in New York, and I began writing sketches for friends who were performing at the Westbeth Theatre in Greenwich Village. I have been writing for the stage ever since.

## What plays have you written for the Rockford area?

The mysteries I've written include *Murder Center Stage*, *Murder Howls at Midnight* and *Dying for Attention*. I have also written such adaptations as *A Christmas Carol*, *The Three Musketeers* and *Jeeves Intervenes*.

## What did you want to be when you grew up?

Organized. Punctual. Maybe it will happen in the next lifetime.



## How long does it take to write a play?

Roughly two months, I guess, although at least a full month of that time involves being stuck at some point in the plot. As long as I know where a scene is going and who the people in it are, the dialogue flows pretty rapidly. I love dialogue, but plotting drives me crazy.

## Aside from writing, what do you do for fun?

I like computers, science fiction, comic books, fantasy movies, anime and murder mysteries. I read 200 books last year. Yes, I keep track... .

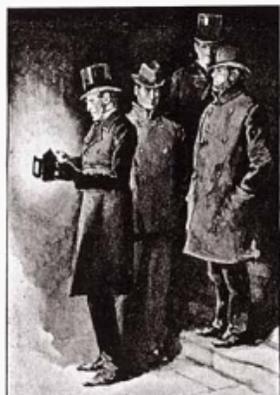
## Biggest pet peeve?

Cell phones in the audience!

Resource: Scordator, Tim. "Margaret Raether." Rockford Register Star. Published 4.25.2008. Accessed. 5.14.2024. <https://www.rrstar.com/story/news/2008/04/25/margaret-raether/44679511007/>

# Sources for Our Play

**Dramaturg Note:** Playwright Margaret pulls plots and characters from multiple Sherlock stories for this adventure. Here are two examples of specific short stories that served as source materials for our play.



## The Red-Headed League

*The Red-Headed League* (REDH) is a short story written by Arthur Conan Doyle first published in *The Strand Magazine* in August 1891.

This is the 4th Sherlock Holmes story.  
Collected in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.



### Plot summary (spoiler)

Mr. Jabez Wilson, a red-headed pawnbroker near the city, is informed by his new employee Vincent Spaulding that The Red-Headed League is proposing an easy and well-paid job only for red haired persons. Mr. Wilson applies and gets the job. He is asked to copy the Encyclopedia Britannica 4 hours a day in a small office at Pope's Court. After two months, suddenly the office is closed, the Red-Headed League is dissolved and his providential job stops with no news from the managers. He decides then to consult Sherlock Holmes. After some investigations, the detective discovers that the League was a pretext intended to take Mr. Wilson away from his shop, so Spaulding (aka the criminal John Clay) could dig a tunnel from the shop to the bank on the other side of the street...

Read more: [https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php/The\\_Red-Headed\\_League#Plot\\_summary\\_\(spoiler\)](https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php/The_Red-Headed_League#Plot_summary_(spoiler))



## The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone

*The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone* (MAZA) is a short story written by Arthur Conan Doyle first published in *The Strand Magazine* in October 1921.

This is the 49th Sherlock Holmes story.  
Collected in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*.



### Plot summary (spoiler)

When returning to Baker Street after a long absence, Watson finds that Holmes has been visited by the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and Lord Cantlemere, who are concerned about the theft of the great yellow Mazarin stone, a Crown diamond. Holmes informs Watson that the stone has been stolen by Count Negretto Silvius, aided by an ex-boxer, Sam Merton. Holmes sets up a dummy bust of himself in the window, to decoy any murderous attempts on his life. When Silvius calls at 221B, Watson is sent to fetch the police, but Holmes then also calls in Merton from the street. Holmes tells Silvius all the evidence which he has accumulated against him, then leaves them alone in the room while he pretends to play his violin in the next room. He actually plays a record and changes place with the dummy behind the curtain of the window. When Silvius attempts to pass the stone to Merton, Holmes snatches it and the pair are arrested. When Lord Cantlemere calls to check on the progress, confidently expecting none, Holmes drops the stone into Lord Cantlemere's pocket and then jokingly suggests that the latter is a receiver of stolen property. In addition to being one of only two cases recorded in the third person (the other being "His Last Bow"), this is the only case where all of the action takes place in 221B.

Read more: [https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php/The\\_Adventure\\_of\\_the\\_Mazarin\\_Stone#Plot\\_summary\\_\(spoiler\)](https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php/The_Adventure_of_the_Mazarin_Stone#Plot_summary_(spoiler))

# The Players



Nathaniel Tenenbaum  
as  
**John Watson, M. D.**



Calder Jameson Shilling  
as  
**Sherlock Holmes**



Nathan Brockett  
as  
**Man**



Sophia Franzella  
as  
**Woman**



Tyler Matthew Campbell  
as  
**John Watson, M. D. u/s**



Mark Waldstein  
as  
**Sherlock Holmes u/s**



David Roby  
as  
**Man u/s**



Ariel Rose  
as  
**Woman u/s**

## THE CHARACTERS

**John Watson, M.D.** An army doctor, discharged after being wounded in Afghanistan, Watson is Holmes' link to humanity.

**Sherlock Holmes** Brilliant, aloof, impatient, obsessive, dismissive, infuriating man who, socially, can be surprisingly obtuse.

**Inspector Lestrade** Scotland Yard Inspector, he much prefers to get the credit.

**Private Simpson** A street urchin enlisted in the Baker Street Irregulars, an army of cheeky boys who report to Holmes as their commander.

**Jack Cooper** A desperate criminal on the run.

**Bobby** A beat cop. He likes to blow his whistle.

**Mrs. Hudson** The world's most long-suffering landlady.

**Winnifred Perkins** Elderly, eccentric homebody who, with her sister, owns a small shop.

**Minerva Perkins** Winnifred's sister and another homebody. Together, the sisters are writing a gothic novel, full of gore.

**Lillian Stanton-Lacy** A flirtatious shop girl who takes quite a fancy to Watson.

**Waiter** Slow-witted and confused.

**Constable Stubbins** A helpful, if unimaginative, policeman.

**Molly** A lady of the evening.

**Umberto the Magnifico** Impresario, theater manager, a man of many accents

**Bert** A humble stagehand who does not speak.

**Frank** The sinister limping man.

## DOUBLING

Holmes and Watson do not double, although Holmes appears, briefly, in disguise.

**Man:** Lestrade, Jack Cooper, Mrs. Hudson, Winnifred Perkins, Waiter, Constable Stubbins, Umberto the Magnifico

**Woman:** Private Simpson, Minerva Perkins, Lillian Stanton-Lacy, Molly, Bert

# Timeline of 1832-1901



1837. Ascension of Queen Victoria to the throne.

1838. Publication of The People's Charter, a working-class manifesto, launches the Chartism movement for political reform.

1839. First Opium War (1839–42) The British Navy's attempted to force the government of China to lift their ban on the opium trade. The British then imposed the Treaty of Nanking, which forced China to increase foreign trade, give compensation, and cede Hong Kong to the British.



1842. The Mines Act of 1842 banned women/children from working in coal, iron, lead and tin mining.

1845. The Irish famine begins. Within five years it would become the UK's worst human disaster, with starvation and emigration reducing the population of Ireland itself by over 50%. The famine permanently changed Ireland's and Scotland's demographics and became a rallying point for nationalist sentiment that pervaded British politics for much of the following century.

1848. Death of 2,000 people a week in a cholera epidemic.

1851. The Great Exhibition (the first World's Fair) is held at the Crystal Palace, with great success and international attention.



1854. Crimean War: Britain, France and Turkey declare limited war on Russia. Russia loses, but very high British casualties makes the work of the nurses led by Florence Nightingale famous.

1857. A concentrated revolt in northern India against the rule of the privately owned British East India Company, is sparked by sepoys (native Indian soldiers) in the company's army. The rebellion, involving not just sepoys but many sectors of the Indian population as well was largely quashed by the British military within a year. The East India Company is replaced by the British government beginning the period of the British Raj.

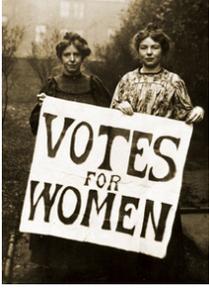


1859. Charles Darwin publishes *On the Origin of Species*, which leads to various reactions. John Stuart Mill publishes *On Liberty*, a defense of the famous harm principle—which holds that the actions of individuals should only be limited to prevent harm to other individual.

1861. Death of Prince Albert; Queen Victoria refused to go out in public for many years, and when she did she wore a widow's bonnet instead of the crown.



# Timeline of 1832-1901



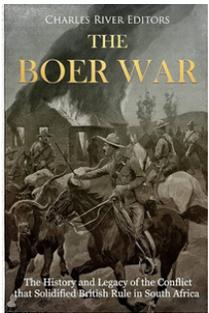
**1866.** In England, the organized suffrage movement began in 1866, when a number of prominent women's rights reformers gathered some 1,500 signatures on a petition to Parliament requesting the right to vote.

**1870-1899.** A series of educational reforms leads to the introduction of compulsory education for 5- to 12-year-olds (13-year-olds in Scotland) and universal access to free state primary education in Great Britain.



**1876.** Scottish-born Canadian-American inventor Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone.

**1879.** The Battle of Isandlwana is the first major encounter in the British Invasion of the Zulu Kingdom in Southern Africa. The battle was a decisive victory for the Zulus and the British Army suffered its worst defeat against an indigenous foe equipped with vastly inferior military technology.



**1881.** The British suffer defeat at the Battle of Majuba Hill, leading to the signing of a peace treaty and later the Pretoria Convention between the British and the reinstated South African Republic, ending the First Boer War. This battle is sometimes claimed to mark the beginning of the decline of the British Empire.

**1882.** British troops begin the occupation of Egypt by taking the Suez Canal, to secure the vital trade route and passage to India, and the country becomes a protectorate.



**1885.** Blackpool Electric Tramway Company starts the first electric tram service in the United Kingdom.

**1888.** The serial killer known as Jack the Ripper murders and mutilates five (and possibly more) women on the streets of London.

**1889.** Emily Williamson founds the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

**1899.** The Second Boer War is fought between the British Empire and the two independent Boer republics. The Boers finally surrendered, and the British annexed the Boer republics.

**1901.** The death of Victoria sees the end of this era. The ascension of her eldest son, Edward, begins the Edwardian era.



# The Victorians



In the history of the United Kingdom and the British Empire, the Victorian era was the period of Queen Victoria's reign, from June 20, 1837 until her death on January 22, 1901.

Queen Victoria's reign lasted for 63 years and seven months, a longer period than any of her predecessors. The term 'Victorian' was in contemporaneous usage to describe the era, which has also been understood in a more extensive sense as a period that possessed sensibilities and characteristics distinct from the periods adjacent to it, in which case it is sometimes dated to begin before Victoria's accession—typically from the passage of or agitation for (during the 1830s) the Reform Act 1832, which introduced wide-ranging change to the electoral system of England and Wales.

Definitions that purport a distinct sensibility or politics to the era have also created skepticism about the worth of the label "Victorian".

Michael Sadleir was insistent that "in truth, the Victorian period is three periods, and not one". He distinguished early Victorianism – the socially and politically unsettled period from 1837 to 1850 – and late Victorianism (from 1880 onwards), with its new waves of aestheticism and imperialism, from the Victorian heyday: mid-Victorianism, 1851 to 1879. He saw the latter period as characterized by a distinctive mixture of prosperity, domestic prudery, and complacency – what G. M. Trevelyan similarly called the "mid-Victorian decades of quiet politics and roaring prosperity".

There were unprecedented demographic changes: the population of England and Wales almost doubled from 16.8 million in 1851 to 30.5 million in 1901, and Scotland's population also rose rapidly, from 2.8 million in 1851 to 4.4 million in 1901. However, Ireland's population decreased sharply, from 8.2 million in 1841 to less than 4.5 million in 1901, mostly due to emigration and the Great Famine. Between 1837 and 1901 about 15 million emigrated from Great Britain, mostly to the United States, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia.

This era saw a staggering amount of technological innovations that proved key to Britain's power and prosperity. Doctors started moving away from tradition and mysticism towards a science-based approach; medicine advanced thanks to the adoption of the germ theory of disease and pioneering research in epidemiology.

Industrialization brought with it a rapidly growing middle class whose increase in numbers had a significant effect on the social strata itself: cultural norms, lifestyle, values and morality.

The rise of the middle class during the era had a formative effect on its character; the historian Walter E. Houghton reflects that "once the middle class attained political as well as financial eminence, their social influence became decisive. The Victorian frame of mind is largely composed of their characteristic modes of thought and feeling". Identifiable characteristics of reform and privacy came to define the middle-class home and lifestyle.

# The Victorians

There was a strong religious drive for higher moral standards led by the nonconformist churches, such as the Methodists and the evangelical wing of the established Church of England. Ideologically, the Victorian era witnessed resistance to the rationalism that defined the Georgian period, and an increasing turn towards romanticism and even mysticism in religion, social values, and arts.

In the Victorian era, English family life increasingly became compartmentalized, the home a self-contained structure housing a nuclear family extended according to need and circumstance to include blood relations.

The concept of "privacy" became a hallmark of the middle-class life. The English home closed up and darkened over the decade (1850s), the cult of domesticity matched by a cult of privacy. Bourgeois existence was a world of interior space, heavily curtained off and wary of intrusion, and opened only by invitation for viewing on occasions such as parties or teas. "The essential, unknowability of each individual, and

society's collaboration in the maintenance of a façade behind which lurked innumerable mysteries, were the themes which preoccupied many mid-century novelists."—Kate Summerscale quoting historian Anthony S. Wohl.

The central feature of Victorian-era politics is the search for reform and improvement, including both the individual personality and society. Three powerful forces were at work. First was the rapid rise of the middle class, in large part displacing the complete control long exercised by the aristocracy. Respectability was their code—a businessman had to be trusted and must avoid reckless gambling and heavy drinking.

Second, the spiritual reform closely linked to evangelical Christianity, including both the Nonconformist sects, such as the Methodists, and especially the evangelical or Low Church element in the established Church of England, typified by Lord Shaftesbury (1801–1885). It imposed fresh moralistic values on society, such as Sabbath observance, responsibility, widespread charity, discipline in the home, and self-examination for the smallest faults and needs of improvement. Starting with the anti-slavery movement of the 1790s, the evangelical moralizers developed highly effective techniques of enhancing the moral sensibilities of all family members and reaching the public at large through intense, very well-organized agitation and propaganda. They focused on exciting a personal revulsion against social evils and personal misbehavior. Asa Briggs points out, "There were as many treatises on 'domestic economy' in mid-Victorian England as on political economy".

The third effect came from the liberalism of philosophical utilitarians, led by intellectuals Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), James Mill (1773–1836) and his son John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). They were not moralistic but scientific. Their movement, often called "Philosophic Radicalism," fashioned a formula for promoting the goal of "progress" using scientific rationality, and business-like efficiency, to identify, measure, and discover solutions to social problems. The formula was an inquiry, legislation, execution, inspection, and report. In public affairs, their leading exponent was Edwin Chadwick (1800–1890). Evangelicals and utilitarians shared a basic middle-class ethic of responsibility and formed a political alliance. The result was an irresistible force for reform.

Thanks to educational reforms, the British population not only approached universal literacy towards the end of the era but also became increasingly well-educated. The market for reading materials of all kinds boomed.



# Sherlock Holmes

**Sherlock Holmes is possibly the most famous literary detective of all time.**

**What do we know about Sherlock Holmes from the stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle?**



Little is known of Holmes' early life or his family background, save that his grandmother was a sister of the French artist Vernet. An estimate of Holmes's age in *His Last Bow* places his year of birth at 1854; the story, set in August 1914, describes him as 60 years of age. It is also known that in his younger years, Holmes attended at least one of the country's leading universities...though it cannot be ascertained whether he was an alumnus of Oxford, Cambridge, or both. Sherlock has an older brother, Mycroft, whom the younger Holmes considered to be more intellectually gifted than himself. Mycroft spent much of his life in Her Majesty's Secret Service. In *The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter*, Sherlock refers to Mycroft as being "seven years [his] senior".

At the age of 20, Holmes was to find his life's calling. For it was in that year that he began his illustrious career as the world's first consulting detective, taking his first case...which his future friend and companion Dr. John Watson would come to title, in his chronicles of Holmes' endeavours, *The Adventure of the Gloria Scott*, in which more background on what caused Holmes to become a detective is presented: a college friend's father complimented him very highly on his deductive skills... His study of science at university having informed his already keen mind and powers of observation, Holmes employed a process of deductive reasoning in his work, with great success.

In early 1881 he is presented as an independent student of chemistry with a variety of very curious side-interests, almost all of which turn out to be single-mindedly bent towards making him superior at solving crimes.

Watson describes Holmes as "bohemian" in habits and lifestyle. Although Holmes is described in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* as having a "cat-like" love of personal cleanliness, Watson also describes Holmes as an eccentric, with no regard for contemporary standards of tidiness or good order. He alternates between days or weeks of listless lassitude and similar periods of intense engagement with a challenging case or with his hobby, experimental chemistry: "extreme exactness and astuteness... [or a] poetic and contemplative mood", "outbursts of passionate energy... followed by reactions of lethargy."

# Sherlock Holmes

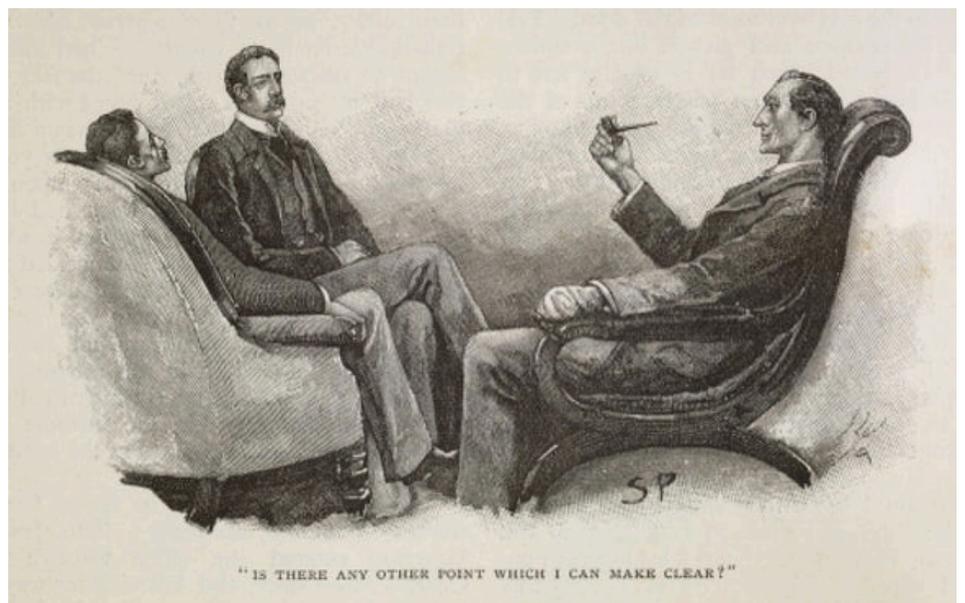
Nevertheless, Watson was very typical of his time in not considering a vice Holmes' habit of smoking (usually a pipe) heavily, nor his willingness to bend the truth and break the law (e.g., lie to the police, conceal evidence, burgle and housebreak) when it suited his purposes. In Victorian England, such actions were not necessarily considered vices as long as they were done by a gentleman for noble purposes, such as preserving a woman's honor or a family's reputation (this argument is discussed by Holmes and Watson in *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton*). Since many of the stories revolve around Holmes and Watson doing such things, a modern reader must accept actions which would be out of character for a "law-abiding" detective living by the standards of a later time. (They remain staples of detective fiction, always being done in a good cause.) Holmes has a strong sense of honour and "doing the right thing".

Holmes can often be quite dispassionate and cold; however, when hot on the trail of a mystery, he can display a remarkable passion given his usual languor.

He has a flair for showmanship, and often, he prepares dramatic traps to capture the culprit of a crime which are staged to impress Watson or one of the Scotland Yard inspectors (as at the end of *The Adventure of the Norwood Builder*). He also holds back on his chain of reasoning, not revealing it or only giving cryptic hints and surprising results, until the very end, when he can explain all of his deductions at once.

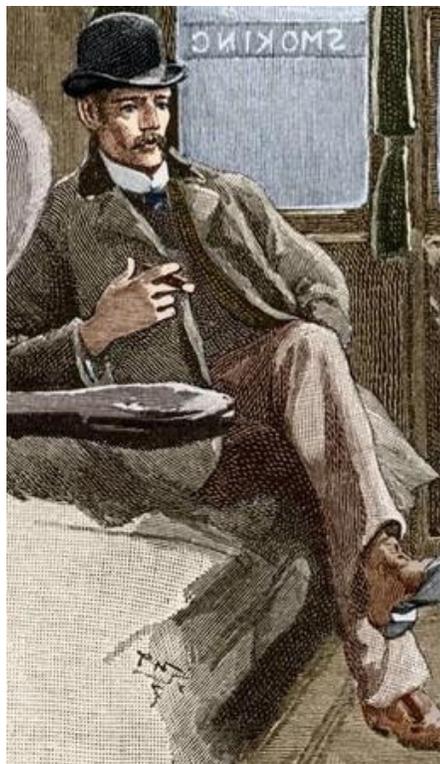
Holmes does have an ego that sometimes seems to border on arrogance; however, his arrogance is usually deserved. He seems to enjoy baffling the police inspectors with his superior deductions. Holmes is usually quite content to allow the police to take the credit for his work, with Watson being the only one to broadcast his own roles in the case (in *The Adventure of the Naval Treaty*, he remarks that of his last fifty-three cases, the police have had all the credit in forty-nine), although he enjoys receiving praise from personal friends and those who take a serious interest in his work.

To read the full article, you can access  
the Baker Street Fandom webpage:  
[https://bakerstreet.fandom.com/wiki/  
Sherlock\\_Holmes](https://bakerstreet.fandom.com/wiki/Sherlock_Holmes)



# Dr. John H. Watson

**The friendship & partnership between Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson is well known. What do we know about John Watson from the stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle?**



Dr. John H. Watson is a medical doctor of some experience (as was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle), and is arguably the only friend and confidant of Sherlock Holmes.

Formerly, he served in the British Army medical corps in Afghanistan, but was discharged following an injury received in the line of duty during the Battle of Maiwand. In *The Sign of Four*, John Watson met Mary Morstan, who later, became his wife.

In the debut Holmes story *A Study in Scarlet*, Watson, as the narrator, describes meeting Holmes, their subsequent sharing of rooms at 221B Baker Street, his attempts to discover the profession of his taciturn companion, Holmes' eventual taking of Watson into his confidence, and the events surrounding their first case together.

Though initially their relationship was little more than vaguely acquainted roommates, the two became the very best of friends, almost like brothers.

By the time they shared *The Adventure of the Three Garridebs*, Holmes had such an attachment to his friend that he nearly panicked at the thought that Watson had been shot. Watson wrote: "It was worth a wound, it was worth many wounds to know the depth of loyalty and love which lay behind that cold mask. The clear, hard eyes were dimmed for a moment, and the firm lips were shaking. For the one and only time I caught a glimpse of a great heart as well as of a great brain. All my years of humble but single-minded service culminated in that moment of revelation." Holmes returns to himself only when he is assured that Watson has been merely scratched by the bullet, adding to the perpetrator that "...if you had killed Watson, you would not have got out of this room alive."

Conan Doyle portrays Watson as a capable and brave individual, whom Holmes does not hesitate to call upon for both moral and physical assistance: "Quickly Watson, get your service revolver!". Watson occasionally attempts to solve crimes on his own, using Holmes's methods. For example, in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Watson efficiently clears up several of the many mysteries confronting the pair, and Holmes praises him warmly for his zeal and intelligence. However, because he is not endowed with Holmes's ability to focus on the essential details of the case, he meets with limited success in other cases, as Holmes remarks "Quite so... you see, but you do not observe."

# Dr. John H. Watson

Watson is not a stupid man (he is, after all, a medical doctor, and one whose talents Holmes holds in the highest esteem), but he does not have Holmes' insight. He serves as a foil to Holmes: the ordinary man against the brilliant, emotionally-detached, analytical machine that Holmes can sometimes be. With the two, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created a clever literary pairing: two vivid characters, different in their function and yet each useful for his purposes. Watson is well aware of both the limits of his abilities and Holmes' reliance on him: "[Holmes] was a man of habits... and I had become one of them... a comrade... upon whose nerve he could place some reliance... a whetstone for his mind. I stimulated him... If I irritated him by a certain methodical slowness in my mentality, that irritation served only to make his own flame-like intuitions and impressions flash up the more vividly and swiftly. Such was my humble role in our alliance." Though he never masters Holmes' deductive methods, Watson is acute enough to follow his friend's reasoning after the fact.

As a military man, Watson is the better strategist, often besting his friend at chess. However, Watson is too guileless to be a proper detective; as Holmes observes in *The Valley of Fear*, he has a definite strain of "pawky humour", but he is naturally open and straightforward, while Holmes can be secretive and devious.

In Conan Doyle's early rough plot outlines, Sherlock Holmes' sidekick was named "Ormond Sacker" before Conan Doyle finally settled on "John Watson". In turn, the introduction of Dr. Watson in the Holmes' novels proved a precursor to other, similar characters. Many of the great fictional detectives have their Watson: Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, for example, is accompanied by Captain Arthur Hastings. In the words of William L. De Andrea, "Watson also serves the important function of catalyst for Holmes' mental processes." From the writer's point of view, Conan Doyle knew the importance of having someone to whom the detective can make enigmatic remarks, a consciousness that's privy to facts in the case without being in on the conclusions drawn from them until the proper time. "Any character who performs these functions in a mystery story has come to be known as a 'Watson!'."



To read the full article, you can access  
the Baker Street Fandom webpage:

[https://bakerstreet.fandom.com/wiki/John\\_Watson](https://bakerstreet.fandom.com/wiki/John_Watson)

# The World of Sherlock Holmes: The First Fandom

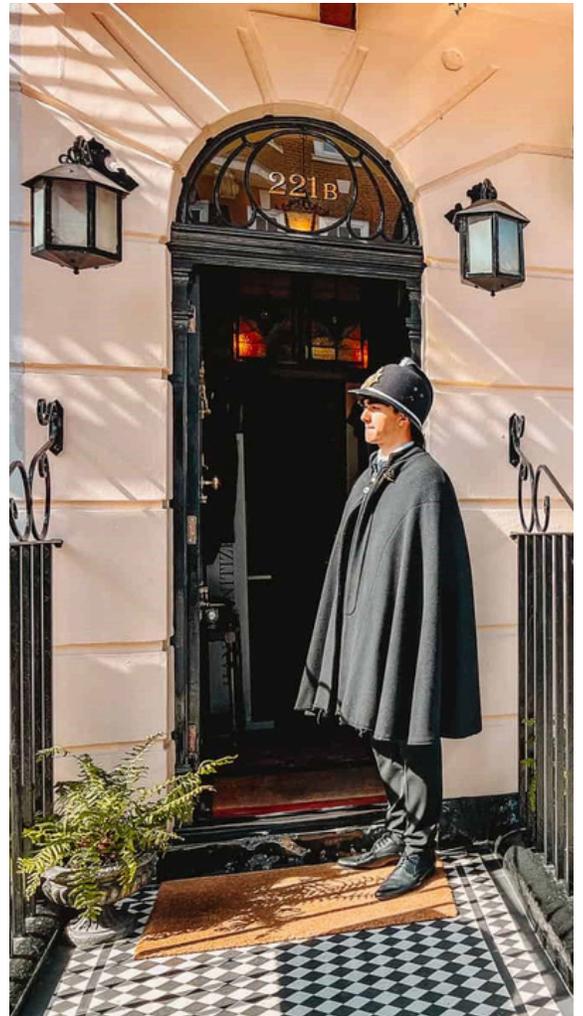
“It has reasonably been claimed that more foreign visitors to London know the address of Sherlock Holmes than know that of the Prime Minister; yet Sherlock Holmes never existed.

When the Abbey National Bank occupied Sherlock Holmes’ famous address, they received thousands of letters for Sherlock Holmes every year and had to employ a secretary to deal with his correspondence: yet Sherlock Holmes never existed.

Respected pillars of society round the world spend countless hours examining every aspect of Sherlock Holmes’ life: yet Sherlock Holmes never existed.

What is the fascination which this apparently fictional character holds, and has held for many decades, for his dedicated followers? No-one has ever produced a single, satisfactory answer to that question...”

Preface to “The Life and Times of Sherlock Holmes”  
by Phillip Weller & Christopher Roden



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**Dramaturg note:** British writer, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, published the first Sherlock Holmes story in The Strand Magazine in 1887. The eccentric detective quickly became a favorite of the reading public. The Strand’s circulation increased dramatically, and libraries were forced to stay open longer on publication days to meet the demand of readers. Not only was the series popular, but Sherlock Holmes became one of the earliest examples of a fictional hero who had “fans.”

In an article entitled, “Sherlock Holmes: the original fandom,” cultural commentator Anastasia Klimchynskaya writes, “*Long before the possibilities of today’s mediated world, [Sherlock Holmes] was one of the first characters to massively, irrevocably, step off the page and into the world, and refuse to get back on the page. To look back on the history of Sherlockianity (my word) is to look back on the emergence of a phenomenon and the formation of much of fandom as we know it today...*”

On the next page is a brief excerpt from Klimchynskaya’s web article reflecting on the fans of Sherlock Holmes. I would highly recommend reading the whole piece. It’s quite fun.

# The World of Sherlock Holmes: The First Fandom

...”Thus were born the **Baker Street Irregulars** (an early example of a “fan club”) and what we know today as **The Great Game**. Deriving its name from Holmes’ famous exclamation, “the game is on!”, whenever he encountered an exciting case, it is an endeavor that began somewhere around 1928, when the venerable scholar Ronald Knox published an article demonstrating that the serious academic attention given to the Bible could be equally well applied to the Sherlock Holmes stories. Knox’s elaborate scholarship and overwhelming attention to detail was intended as a parody of academic study, but “Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes” took on a life of its own. People took it seriously, and it soon became the founding text of Sherlockian scholarship, and of **The Game**.

**The Game** treats Holmes and Watson as real people, the events of the stories as true, and Doyle as Watson’s literary executor...Since the stories were true, any anomalies or omissions in them can be explained away by Watson’s forgetfulness or intentional obfuscation, and the purpose of the Game is to apply Holmes’ own detective methods to resolve these mysteries. It is a Game of detection and of scholarship, applied to the Canon or the Sacred Writings (as the Holmes stories are called, true to the Game’s roots in Biblical scholarship). Most importantly, this Game must be played “as solemnly as a county cricket match at Lord’s; the slightest touch of extravagance or burlesque ruins the atmosphere” (a quote from Dorothy L. Sayers-also a Sherlockian).

However, the Game is best played communally, and a handful of years after Knox’s article, the first – and, today, still the most prestigious Sherlock Holmes society was founded: the Baker Street Irregulars. Named after the homeless urchins who served as Holmes’ own spy and intelligence network, this exclusive, by-invitation-only society is one of the highest honors in the Sherlockian world. The society’s members have included such notable figures as Isaac Asimov, F.D. Roosevelt, and Neil Gaiman. Yes, they, too, “believed” that Holmes was real.

This legacy lives on today: the Irregulars still induct new members and publish the Baker Street Journal, the foremost publication of Sherlockian scholarship, which dedicates itself to playing the Game most seriously (yours truly recently had the honour of an article published in the latest issue). They still gather every year in New York for the Baker Street Irregulars Weekend, centered around January 6th (according to scholarship of the Canon, that is the date of Holmes’ birthday) to hold their mysterious, by-invitation-only dinner, where, presumably, they toast the Master and engage in revelry (I cannot vouch for the details, as they’re bigger secrets than some of the cases Watson refused to write up)...

To Read the Full Article you can go to the “Den of Geek” webpage:  
<https://www.denofgeek.com/books/sherlock-holmes-the-original-fandom-2/>



# TAPROOT THEATRE



## C O M P A N Y

### Mission Statement:

Taproot Theatre Company tells stories of hope, serving the Pacific Northwest through live theatre and educational programs.



Taproot Theatre Company was founded in 1976 by six friends, five of them graduates from Seattle Pacific University. From its humble beginnings as a touring group, the company is now Seattle's largest mid-size theatre company. Today Taproot Theatre serves over 150,000 people annually throughout the Pacific Northwest with its Jewell Mainstage season, Isaac Studio Theatre season, Touring programs and Acting Studio.

#### Producing Artistic Director

Karen Lund

#### Associate Artistic Director

Bretteney Beverly

#### Director of Production

Mark Lund

#### Consulting Director of Finance

Kayti Barnett-O'Brien

#### Director of Marketing

Nikki Visel

#### Interim Director of Education & Outreach

Melanie Godsey

#### Director of Development

Gina Cavallo

### In-school Residencies, Workshops and Tours

Melanie Godsey, Interim Director of Education and Outreach

206.329.3669

Chloe Newton, Interim Associate Director of Education and Outreach

206.529.3674

#### Midweek Matinees

Jenny Cross, Marketing Associate

206.529.3676

Box Office: 206.781.9707

Administrative Office: 206.781.9705

[taproottheatre.org](http://taproottheatre.org)

# Education Programs

## *In-School Residencies & Workshops*

From drama games to acting classes to putting on a production, Taproot Theatre's residencies can range from several weeks to months, or an entire school year. Whether during the school day or after school as an enrichment program, let Taproot's trained teaching artists introduce a whole new world to your students.

Our theatre arts professional will visit your classroom for a workshop that will inspire and excite your students. They will develop basic acting skills and explore non-theatre curriculum using theater as a medium.



## *Camps & Classes*

Taproot Theatre Company's Acting Studio is a year-round instructional program for theatre artists of all ages and experience levels. We are devoted to the wholeness of the artist with the goal of creating a nurturing environment to help each student develop his or her unique gifts.



## *Touring Productions*

The Road Company-performing plays for elementary and secondary schools focusing on issues such as bullying prevention, substance abuse, and friendship skills. Family oriented productions and improv comedy for churches, clubs, office parties and other groups.

