

**1859 - 1930**

**Sir Arthur  
Conan Doyle**



# Overview

- British novelist, short story writer, poet, doctor of medicine
- Born in Edinburgh, Scotland on May 22, 1859
- Studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh (where he met Dr. Joseph Bell)



# As a child...

- His father, a chronic alcoholic, was later committed to an insane asylum
- He had a special bond with his mom:
  - *"In my early childhood, as far as I can remember anything at all, the vivid stories she would tell me stand out so clearly ..."*
  - *"My mother had been so splendid that I could not fail her."*



# As a teenager...

- His wealthy family members paid for him to go to boarding school
- Athletic: cricket, football/soccer, sailing
- Smart: *“He was often found, surrounded by a bevy of totally enraptured younger students, listening to the amazing stories he would make up to amuse them.”*
- SURPRISE! He decides to go to medical school.

# As a doctor...

- Opened his own medical practice, but was moderately successful
- In his down time, he continued writing stories...



# As an adult...

- Married Louise “Touie” Hawkins
  - “gentle and amiable”
  - They had 2 children.
  - She died of TB in 1906.
- Married Jean Leckie in 1907 ... after meeting her in 1897
  - They had 3 children: Denis, Adrian, & Lena Jean
  - He spoke his last words to her: “You are wonderful.”





# As an author...

- Wrote an article about the Boer War, and was knighted in 1902
- Wrote many historical articles and nonfiction works



# Death

- Found clutching his chest in the hall of his home in East Sussex, England
- Died of heart attack on July, 7, 1930, aged 71
- Tombstone in New Forest, Hampshire reads:

STEEL TRUE  
BLADE STRAIGHT  
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE  
KNIGHT

PATRIOT, PHYSICIAN & MAN OF LETTERS





# Major works

- Sherlock Holmes: 4 novels & 56 short stories
  - Originally published short stories monthly in the *Strand Magazine*
  - 1<sup>st</sup> novel, 1886: *A Study in Scarlet*, including Sherlock Holmes & Dr. Watson
  - 1<sup>st</sup> book of short stories (12): *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, in 1892
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> collection: *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, in 1894
  - "The Speckled Band" was written in 1907 and performed as a successful play

# Sherlock Holmes

- Most famous fictional detective of all time
- Based on Conan Doyle's medical professor, Dr. Joseph Bell - gifted at observation, logic, deduction, and diagnosis
- Lived at 221B Baker Street, London
- Many readers thought Holmes was REAL!

# World's Best Detective

- Courageous
- Clever
- Attention to details
- Eccentric





# Dr. John Watson

- Assistant, sidekick
- Narrator – loyal, gentleman, observes
- Average intelligence
- Foil

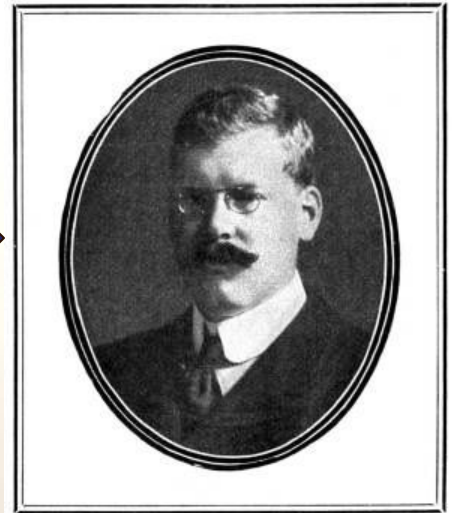


# R.I.P. Holmes

- After two novels and 24 short stories, Conan Doyle grew tired of Holmes and wanted to spend his time with more “important” work - so he killed him off in the short story “The Final Problem” in 1893.
- How? In a battle with his nemesis, Professor Moriarty! They both fall to their deaths at the Reichenbach Falls. Readers were **OUTRAGED!**
  - Wore black armbands
  - Sent death threats to Conan Doyle

# But then...

- While vacationing in 1901, ACD was playing golf with his friend, Bertram Fletcher Robinson.
- Robinson told him of a local legend about Squire Richard Cabell, a monstrously evil man, whose death came at the mouths of a pack of huge, fire-breathing hounds (called Black Shucks)...





- Conan Doyle could NOT pass this up... and he didn't really want to invent a *new* detective, so to his readers' joy, he made Holmes his main character once again.
- Incidentally, he did not bring Holmes back to life (yet), but he set the story at an earlier time in Holmes' life.



# Holmes returns!

- Eventually, Conan Doyle *did* decide to bring back Holmes, and he did so in a story called “The Adventure of the Empty House.”
- *Apparently*, Holmes had faked his own death to fool Moriarty’s henchmen.
- ACD went on to write 32 more stories and one more novel before officially retiring his famous

# Weird, but true...

- ACD wrote a book called *The Coming of the Fairies* (1921).
- He was convinced that fairies existed and proved it by adding photographs.
- The photographs were actually faked by two young girls - the “fairies” were paper cutouts!



# The Cottingley Fairies



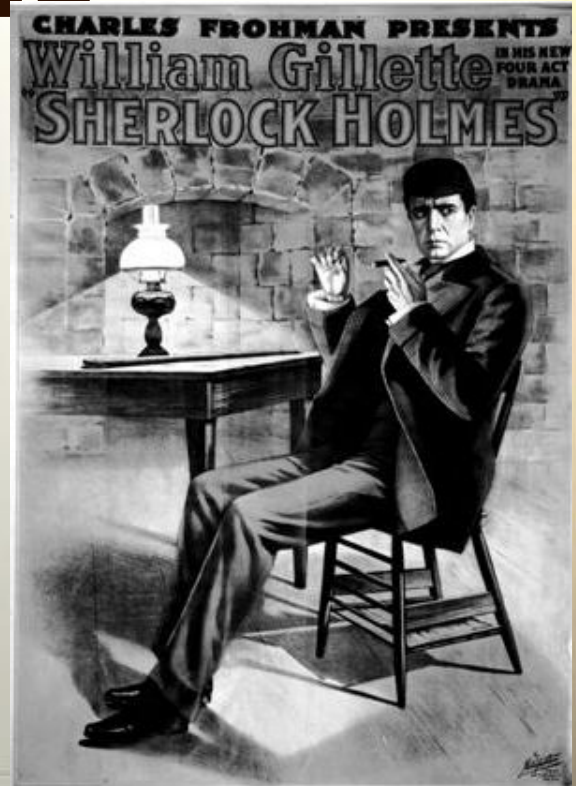
# Legacy of Holmes

- “Christopher Clausen asserts confidently that *‘few characters in all of literature are as widely known as Sherlock Holmes.’*”
- “221B Baker Street—or the closest thing to it that can be identified in the modern London thoroughfare—is a pilgrimage site for faithful Holmes devotees from around the world.”



# Ranks 9<sup>th</sup> on the Fictional 100 Most Influential Characters in World Literature

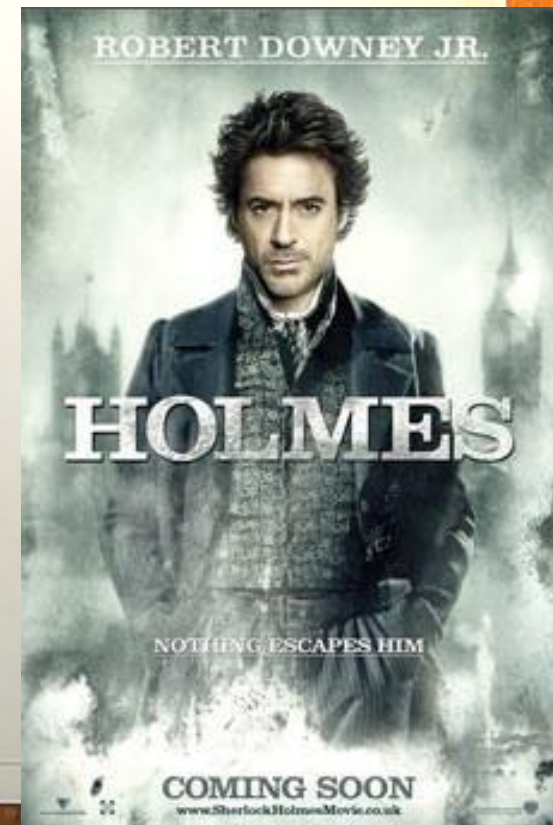
“Each generation wants to see its own Holmes in action. At least twenty-one plays have been based on aspects of Holmes’s life.”





# Film

“Holmes’s life in films is even more spectacular. *The Guinness World Records 2000* lists him as the character most often portrayed in film.”



# References

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