



The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (original stories)

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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In Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created one of the world's best known and (arguably) most fully realized literary characters. Since Doyle's death, there have been plenty of people writing knockoffs of his stories. But with rare exceptions (Nicholas Meyer comes to mind), most have not lived up to the high standards Doyle set in at least the best of his Holmes tales.

This volume includes the complete canon of Doyle's original stories -- four novels and fifty-six short stories, from "A Study in Scarlet" to "His Last Bow." While there are a handful of cases that bore significantly on international affairs (e.g. "The Bruce-Partington Plans"), most of them are of interest simply because of that touch of the *_outré_* that Holmes loved so much and that provided such stimulating material to the ideal reasoner.

There are some clunkers in the canon, of course, but the vast majority of these stories -- especially the earliest ones -- are just brilliant. If you are reading them for the first time, I envy you; the sturdy Dr. John Watson is about to introduce you to a new world, a world of Victorian gaslight and Stradivarius violins, of hansom cabs and cries of "The game's afoot!"

For in reading this volume you will find such classic tales as "The Red-Headed League" and "The Man With The Twisted Lip"; you will encounter the famous dog that did nothing in the night-time ("Silver Blaze") and several versions of Holmes's favorite maxim ("When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth"); and you will meet one of the most fascinating and memorable characters ever to spring from the printed page: Holmes himself.

Perhaps most importantly, you will catch a glimpse of the world as an ideal reasoner might see it -- not as a grab-bag of random atomic facts in which our own role is negligible, but as a vast interconnected whole in which each part bears some necessary relation to the rest, and in which the reasoned pursuit of justice in all matters great and small is the business of each and every one of us.

Incidentally, the twentieth-century philosopher who presented that vision most consistently and cogently is, to my own mind, Brand Blanshard, and any Holmes readers who are interested in philosophy may enjoy investigating Blanshard's works as well.

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