



Sir Arthur
Conan Doyle
**A
Study
in
Scarlet**

Read by
David Timson

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	PART 1: Being a reprint from the Reminiscences of John H. Watson M.D. Mr Sherlock Holmes	4:14
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Standing in the Criterion Bar	5:49
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	“Dr Watson, Mr Sherlock Holmes”...’	8:06
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	The Science of Deduction	4:26
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	‘His ignorance was as remarkable as his knowledge.’	7:21
<input type="checkbox"/> 6	‘It was upon the 4th of March...’	11:27
<input type="checkbox"/> 7	The Lauriston Garden Mystery	5:55
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	‘It was a foggy, cloudy morning...’	4:42
<input type="checkbox"/> 9	‘A short passage, bare-planked and dusty, led to the kitchen and offices.’	5:24
<input type="checkbox"/> 10	“We have it all here,” said Gregson...’	9:03
<input type="checkbox"/> 11	What John Rance Had to Tell	7:35
<input type="checkbox"/> 12	‘Audley Court was not an attractive locality.’	9:04
<input type="checkbox"/> 13	‘Our Advertisement Brings a Visitor’	8:20
<input type="checkbox"/> 14	‘As he spoke there was a sharp ring at the bell.’	8:12
<input type="checkbox"/> 15	Tobias Gregson Shows What He Can Do	5:53
<input type="checkbox"/> 16	‘There was a violent peal at the bell...’	6:43
<input type="checkbox"/> 17	“Mr Drebber has been with us nearly three weeks...”’	8:03

[18]	Light in the Darkness	4:41
[19]	'There was something so methodical and so incomprehensible...'	7:23
[20]	'Sherlock Holmes drew a long breath...'	5:16
[21]	'Gregson and Lestrade seemed to be far from satisfied by this assurance...'	4:02
[22]	PART 2: The Country of the Saints: The Great Alkali Plain	6:44
[23]	"'You've hurt me,'" said a childish voice, reproachfully.'	7:41
[24]	'Had the wanderer remained awake for another half-hour...'	4:04
[25]	'On the little plateau which crowned the barren hill...'	7:31
[26]	The Flower of Utah	6:52
[27]	'It was a warm June morning and the Latter-day Saints were as busy as bees...'	9:47
[28]	John Ferrier Talks with the Prophet	4:34
[29]	'One fine morning'	8:23
[30]	A Flight for Life	4:30
[31]	'It was, indeed, high time that someone capable of giving advice...'	6:23

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- [32] 'Outside all was calm and quiet.' 10:40
 - [33] The Avenging Angels 6:34
 - [34] 'He had now come to the mouth of the very defile in which he had left them.' 8:45
 - [35] 'The prediction of the Mormon was only too well fulfilled.' 7:51
 - [36] 'A Continuation of the Reminiscences of John Watson, M.D. 6:11
 - [37] 'With these words, Jefferson Hope leaned back in his chair...' 6:21
 - [38] '"The moment for which I had waited so long had at last come."' 5:32
 - [39] 'It was nearer one' 7:12
 - [40] '"That was how Enoch Drebber came to his end."' 4:19
 - [41] The Conclusion 4:48
 - [42] '"On entering the house this last inference was confirmed."' 8:59

Total time: 4:45:08

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

A Study in Scarlet

Dr Stamford of Barts Hospital is one of the unsung heroes of the 19th century. This is not for any particular medical accomplishment, though for all we know of him he may have become a celebrated surgeon; nor for any lasting service to the British Empire in its heyday either. Furthermore, he will not be found in 'Who's Who' or 'The Dictionary of National Biography'.

His achievement was in the world of literature and lovers of crime literature are indebted to him the world over. For it was Dr Stamford of Barts Hospital who, some time in or around 1881, hit upon the bright idea of introducing his old friend Dr John Watson (then in search of lodgings) to Mr Sherlock Holmes, who was likewise situated.

'Dr Watson, Mr Sherlock Holmes,' said Stamford introducing us.

'How are you?' he said cordially, gripping my hand with a strength for which I should hardly have given him credit. 'You have been in Afghanistan I perceive...'

And thus with this relatively insignificant act of friendship, which probably he never

thought of in future years, Stamford set in motion a sequence of adventures in criminal detection the like of which has never been equalled in world literature.

Of course 'Stamford' is fictitious, and it is to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle we must give thanks.

The writing of fiction proved to be more satisfactory to Dr Conan Doyle in Southsea in 1886, than the practice of medicine. So he determined to put his considerable energies into the creation of a full-length novel – his first in that genre. It began life as the awkwardly-titled 'The Tangled Skein', but during its gestation became **A Study in Scarlet** and introduced to the world the unforgettable characters of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson.

It was no easy birth. Conan Doyle struggled to get the names of his most famous characters right. Doyle's notes show he experimented with 'Sherrinford' as Holmes' Christian name.

Watson's first incarnation was as 'Ormond Sacker'. Perhaps thinking this too eccentric a name for the down-to-earth character that was developing, he chose

plain John Watson instead, maybe remembering a real doctor of that name with whom he was then acquainted in Southsea.

The evolution of the name that is now famous the world over is more complex. The origins of 'Sherlock' have been variously attributed to an Irish name, a well-known cricketer, or even one of Doyle's old school friends at Stonyhurst, a Peter Sherlock. What is more certain is that his surname, 'Holmes', was a conscious tribute to the American author Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894). Doyle never met him, but admired him as a 'glorious fellow, so tolerant, so witty, so worldly-wise'.

It is the merging of the unusual Christian name (Sherlock) with the common-place surname (Holmes) that gives us the first clues about the detective's personality. Methodical routine analysis on the one hand, linked with a flash of deductive genius on the other.

Doyle had long enjoyed the Dupin stories of Edgar Allan Poe, and the lesser-known detective stories of Gaborieau, but felt he could improve on the formula. Whilst training to be a doctor at Edinburgh University, he had come under the influence of a remarkable man, Dr Joseph Bell, a

professor of medicine. His insistence that his students observe their patients minutely before making a diagnosis, had stayed in Doyle's mind. Bell had made the art of deduction into a science, and it was this scientific approach to solving crime that Doyle so successfully grafted on to the creations of Poe and Gaborieau to produce the world's greatest detective – 'a scientific detective who solved cases on his own merits and not through the folly of the criminal'. Familiar as we are today with fictional detectives using such methods, this was entirely original in 1886, when the detective story was in its infancy.

Originality, however, often takes time to be recognised. Doyle sent his manuscript off to the 'Cornhill Magazine' and met with rejection. Two other publishers followed suit. A fourth publisher, Ward, Lock & Co., showed a whiff of interest but declared that 'cheap fiction' was flooding the market just then, and all they were prepared to offer was £25 for the copyright. It was a blow to the confidence of a developing young writer who wavered, and considered putting the manuscript back in a drawer, and concentrating a little more on his medical practice.

With great reluctance Doyle accepted

the offer and, as he said cynically in his autobiography, 'I never at any time received another penny for it'. The novel scarcely caused a ripple when it did eventually appear. Perhaps this was because it was sandwiched between short stories, seasonal articles and advertisements in '*Beeton's Christmas Annual*' of 1887. However, it was thought promising enough to be published separately a year later.

It is a curious novel, as the central character, Holmes, disappears for a third of the book, when Doyle in a flashback sequence explains the crime's origins in America. In this section Doyle adopts the 'Western' style of the American writer Bret Harte (1836-1902), but tension and excitement replace historical and geographical accuracy.

'Sierra Blanca' (or Blanco in 'Study'), for instance, does exist but is in New Mexico, several hundred miles south of the Mormon territories. Likewise, Doyle's epic description of the Mormons' arrival at Salt Lake Valley: 'nigh upon ten thousand', belies the truth of the event. The first settlement in 1847 was a mere 148 Mormons, though thousands followed in the months after. Perhaps Conan Doyle would say as he once said of other discrepancies in his stories:

'These little things happen'.

It is intriguing to ponder on why Conan Doyle chose to include a lengthy section illustrating the foundation and habits of the Mormon state of Utah. The Mormons, properly known as the Latter-day Saints, had had a troubled existence since their founder Joseph Smith had received a vision of the Book of Mormon in New York in 1830. It records the relations of the early inhabitants of America with God. The Mormon religion rejects the harshness of Calvinism for a more optimistic creed of free will and effort for man's salvation. Such freethinking, which included a belief in polygamy, made the sect unpopular with ordinary Americans, mistrust and violence led them on a number of occasions to move on and seek a 'holy land' for themselves. It was Brigham Young (1801-1877) who succeeded Joseph Smith as leader, who entered the valley of Salt Lake with 148 followers, declaring 'This is the right place'.

Doyle, with an eye for topicality in his stories, reflects the strong feelings of opposition to the Mormons in America in the late 1880s. The issue of polygamy had come to a head, and by 1887 (the year of the publication of **A Study in Scarlet**), the U.S. Government succeeded in making the

Mormons submit to the law that made polygamy a crime. Conan Doyle was looking for an American audience when he wrote this novel and he found one. Sales of the novel in America when it first appeared were healthier than in Britain.

But Doyle may have had other motives for attacking the Mormons so viciously in this tale. Since the early 1880s, he had begun to lose his faith in Roman Catholicism, and was becoming an agnostic. He naturally felt an aversion therefore to confident religious cults like the Mormons who retained many traditional Christian values. 'The evils of religion', he said, 'have all come from accepting things which cannot be proved'. By 1889 he had 'laid aside the old charts as useless and had quite despaired of ever finding a new one which would enable me to steer an intelligible course.' This search for faith would encourage him to adopt some very strange 'causes' (including many lost ones), and to settle on the controversial faith of spiritualism.

Yet perhaps the most remarkable feature of **A Study in Scarlet** is that here, in the very first Sherlock Holmes novel, Doyle succeeded in creating not only a unique and vivid character in the detective himself, but also the key relationship with Dr Watson

that proved very much a part of the success of the many subsequent stories.

Notes by David Timson

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

DVOŘÁK STRING QUARTETS OPP. 61 & 80
Vlach Quartet

8.553372

PARRY OVERTURE TO AN UNWRITTEN TRAGEDY
Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Andrew Penny

8.553469

Music programming by Nicolas Soames

Cover picture: Hemesh Alles

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Edited by Sarah Butcher, SBS
Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

A Study in Scarlet

Read by **David Timson**

'Dr Watson, Mr Sherlock Holmes,' said Stamford introducing us... and with these words the world is also introduced for the first time to the great detective and his indefatigable assistant. A *Study in Scarlet* was published in 1887, the first of Conan Doyle's full-length Holmes novels. It plunges us straight into the dark world of an unsolved murder in Victorian London, which has links to the American West and the Mormons. Holmes displays his powers to solve 'the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life.'



David Timson has performed in modern and classic plays across the country and abroad, including *Wild Honey* for Alan Ayckbourn, *Hamlet*, *The Man of Mode* and *The Seagull*. He has been seen on TV in *Nelson's Column* and *Swallows and Amazons*, and in the film *The Russia House*. A familiar and versatile audio and radio voice, he reads *The Middle Way*, eight other volumes of *Sherlock Holmes Adventures* and also directs *Twelfth Night*, *Henry V* and *King Richard III* for Naxos AudioBooks.

"It's always a pleasure to listen to the mellow tones of David Timson. His pacing is impeccable, his characterisation superb, and, as ever, the recording is enhanced by well-chosen music. Informative sleeve notes."

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER, THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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