

# CHAPTER III

## SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE AND HIS WORKS

### A. A Brief Biography of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was a famous writer born on May 22, 1859, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He settled in London after he finished his medicine study at Edinburgh University. He started practicing in 1882 in the Southsea for eight years.<sup>1</sup> He was a not-so-famous doctor. Thus, it allowed him to have much free time to do his own business: writing. Arthur's father is Charles Altamont Doyle, a chronic alcoholic who married Arthur's mother Mary Foley, a vivacious and very well educated young woman of seventeen.

Arthur attended University of Edinburgh at age seventeen. During his university years he came under the influence of materialists such as Joseph Bell, his self-proclaimed prototype for Sherlock Holmes, who taught his students deductive reasoning through observing material phenomenon. As a result of this training, Conan Doyle became convinced that observation and deductive reasoning could solve every mystery of life.<sup>2</sup>

In 1887, Conan Doyle wrote a novel which published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, under the title *A Study in Scarlet* which introduced the immortal Sherlock Holmes, a London-based consulting detective who used his apartment in 221b Baker Street, London as his detective agency. He used his ability to solve various cases which usually given by police detectives or private inquiry agencies who was not able to solve the case themselves or by the client who need answers for their mysterious incident. With his colleague Dr. John, H. Watson, Sherlock Holmes character grew tremendously among the mystery and detective book. It makes Conan Doyle named to be a successful modern detective stories writer.<sup>3</sup>

Conan Doyle continued his work by creating other story which featured by Sherlock Holmes. Three years after his first novel, *The Sign of Four* was published in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* in 1890. The increasing number of fans of Sherlock Holmes made Conan Doyle devoted his life for writing. He left medicine and wrote many other stories with the character of Sherlock Holmes which catapulted him to fame.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Arthur Conan Doyle Conan Doyle died at his home on 7 July 1930 following a heart attack. His last words before departing for "the greatest and most glorious adventure of all," were addressed to his wife. He whispered, "You are wonderful."

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<sup>1</sup> Low, Harry, *A Day with Dr. Conan Doyle*, (London: *Strand Magazine*, August/1892), p. 186

<sup>2</sup> Homer, W. Michael, *Arthur Conan Doyle: Spiritualism and 'New Religion'*, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, (52 [Summer 1984]: 264-74), p. 99

<sup>3</sup> Doyle, Arthur Conan, *Great Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, (Yogyakarta, Narasi: 2008), trans., p. Cover

## **B. Synopsis of Novel and Short Stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**

### **1. A Study in Scarlet**

Dr. John Watson, the narrator, settling in London to recover from a wound and illness he sustained while acting as a military doctor during the Second Afghan War. One day he runs into an acquaintance, Stamford, while at a bar. Watson confides in his friend that he needs a new living arrangement, as his previous one was too expensive. Stamford responds that another friend of his has also expressed this desire, and takes Watson to the university laboratory where his friend –Sherlock Holmes –is working on an experiment.

Stamford gives some background information on Holmes, such as the fact that his true profession is unknown, that he is eccentric and brilliant, and that his knowledge is specialized but diverse. After discussing their personal idiosyncrasies, Holmes and Watson decide to live together. Watson watches the enigmatic Holmes and notes his strange behavior and interests. The living arrangement proves itself pleasant for both men.

One morning Watson notices an article about the art of deduction based on observation. The tiniest detail can yield a multiplicity of information. Watson scoffs at this theory, but is surprised to learn that Holmes was the article's author. Holmes explains that he is a consulting detective; his powers of rational, reasoned observation and deduction allow him to help clients and even solve crimes. He laments that there have been very few good cases of late.

However, a good case soon drops in his lap when he is asked by Scotland Yard detective Gregson to assist him in solving a crime just recently committed. Holmes asks Watson to accompany him and they travel to an empty house in a London neighborhood. There they observe a crime scene that includes cab prints in the street and footprints in the yard, a dead man who has been poisoned but not robbed laid out in a room, and the word RACHE (the German word for revenge) in blood on the wall. A woman's wedding ring falls off of the body when it is lifted. The dead man's name is Enoch Drebber, and he was from Cleveland. There was a note to his secretary, Joseph Stangerson.

Over the next couple of days Watson watched more pieces of the puzzle fall into place for Holmes. He informed Watson how he determined the murderer's age and height from his observations, as well as his complexion. An interview with the constable on duty that night revealed that a drunken man in the street was actually probably the murderer returned for the ring. In the middle of the investigation, another Scotland Yard detective on the case named Lestrade, whom Holmes respected, bursts into the Holmes' and Watson's apartment announcing that Stangerson had also been killed. This turned out to be a result of a stabbing, not poison. In Stangerson's room was a box of the pills that Holmes identified as the method of death for Drebber. With this piece of information

Holmes excitedly announces that his investigation is complete. Moments later, a cab driver that Holmes called for arrived to pick him up. Holmes burst out that this man, Jefferson Hope, is the murderer of Drebber and Stangerson. With the help of Watson and the detectives, the man was subdued. This is the end of part one.

Part two begins with a vivid description of the wild, isolated, and dangerous great American desert. There were two travelers struggling to survive after the deaths of their companions –the tall and gaunt John Ferrier, and his tiny and lovely adopted daughter Lucy. They were rescued from starvation by a massive caravan –the Latter Day Saints on their exodus. Their leader Brigham Young allowed Ferrier to travel with them if he converts; the latter agreed. The caravan continued to Utah.

The subsequent years saw the population and wealth of the Mormons' chosen site of Salt Lake City explode. Ferrier grew prosperous amongst the Mormons, but refused to marry. Lucy grew up beautiful and independent. One day she was saved from near death in a herd of stampeding cattle by the handsome, solitary, and industrious hunter/miner Jefferson Hope. The two fell in love and Ferrier gave them his permission to marry when Hope returned from a few months' journey.

This was unacceptable to Brigham Young, who personally visited Ferrier and commanded Lucy to marry one of the sons of the Elders, Enoch Drebber or Joseph Stangerson. He gave Ferrier a month for her to decide. Young's behavior was typical of the manner in which the Mormons had been conducting themselves; they were once persecuted but had now turned persecutors. Their community was secretive, violent, controlling, and exclusive. Ferrier had long hated the Mormons and promised his daughter she would not have to marry either of the sons and that they could escape.

Drebber and Stangerson arrogantly visited Ferrier's house to talk to him about Lucy, but he threw them out. This egregious act of disrespect increased the surveillance and threats levied upon Ferrier and his daughter. Finally, the night before the month was up, Jefferson Hope arrived at their home in the middle of the night and the three escaped into the mountains. Unfortunately, when Hope went off to hunt game to feed to famished escapees, he returned to an empty campsite –Ferrier had been murdered and Lucy abducted for marriage.

Hope made his way back down to Salt Lake City and learned that Lucy had been married to Drebber a few days before. Within a month she died from heartsickness. Hope swore that he would spend his life exacting revenge for the murders (he deemed Lucy's death a virtual murder). Taking her wedding ring off her dead finger before she was buried, Hope fled Utah to concoct a plan and raise money.

He tracked Drebber and Stangerson all over Europe. The two men had been part of a fringe group of Mormons that had broken away. They were also aware that Hope had

been dogging their steps for many years, and always managed to be a step ahead of him. Hope finally learned they were in London and set in motion his plan to murder them.

At this point the narrative returns to Holmes, Watson, the detectives, and their detainee. Hope was taken to the police station but asks to tell his tale because he would not be going to be able to have a trial or go to prison. The men learned this was because Hope had an aortic aneurism that could burst any day. He was allowed to finish his narrative.

Hope explained how he got a job as a cab driver and tracked Drebber and Stangerson. He caught Drebber drunk one night and killed him with poison. He tried to do the same with Stangerson but had to stab him in self-defense when the latter fought back. He remained driving the cab for a few days so as to not appear suspicious. The next day Hope was discovered dead of the aneurism, a peaceful smile upon his face.

Holmes spoke with Watson about his ability to reason backwards; this method helped him solve the case. He further elucidated the ways in which he figured out certain aspects of the case, especially that it was about a woman. The novel ends with Holmes and Watson reading a newspaper article about the end of the investigation; it only mentions Holmes as an amateur detective who helped but gave primary credit to Lestrade and Gregson.

## **2. The Sign of Four**

The Sign of Four takes place in 1888 in London. It starts off with Dr. Watson explaining how he has watched Sherlock Holmes, his very intelligent friend; take cocaine three times a day for the past several months. Watson has been too afraid to stand up to Holmes and ask him to stop. Once he finally overcomes his fear and explains the bad effects of cocaine to Holmes, his response is that taking the medication is, “stimulating and clarifying to the mind”

Ms. Morstan comes to Sherlock Holmes and explains her case. Her father, Captain Morstan, was in India and in charge of a convict regiment along with Major Sholto. He sent to his daughter explaining that he had a 12-month leave and was coming home. She went to meet him at his hotel and he was not there. The hotel said he was staying there, but had left and not come back yet. Major Sholto was Captain Morstan’s only friend in London that Ms. Morstan knew about and he claimed that he didn’t even know his friend had come home.

A few years later, there was an ad in the newspaper asking for Ms. Morstan’s home address. The day she gave her address, she received a very valuable pearl in the mail. She has been getting a pearl every year since and now has a total of six pearls. Now, she has received a letter asking her to meet the sender that night with two other people, as long as they are not cops.

Sherlock and Watson agree to accompany her. During the ride Ms. Morstan shows Holmes a paper she found with her father's things. On the paper there was what looked to be a map and it said "the sign of four" with three Indian names and the English name of Jonathan Small. Holmes also discovers that Major Sholto died right before Ms. Morstan started to get her pearls. This leads Holmes to believe that Major Sholto knew how Captain Morstan died.

The three friends eventually reach the home of Thaddeus Sholto, Major Sholto's youngest son. Holmes asks Sholto questions about his father and finds out that his father seemed to be scared of men with a wooden leg. Right before Major Sholto died he told Thaddeus and his twin brother, Bartholomew, to give Ms. Morstan her share of the hidden treasure that he and Captain Morstan got in India. Once Captain Morstan came back to England he came to Major Sholto's house and they argued about sharing the treasure and Morstan died from a heart attack. Major Sholto did not call the police because he was afraid he would be blamed for the death and didn't want to explain the treasure, so Sholto got rid of the body on his own.

Major Sholto was just about to tell his sons where they could find the treasure when a man with a wooden leg appeared at the window and he died instantly of fear. The brothers looked for the hidden treasure, but couldn't find it. However, before Major Sholto died he had planned to send a chaplet to Ms. Morstan and left it out. This is how Ms. Morstan has been getting the pearls.

The two brothers have recently found the treasure and Thaddeus contacted Ms. Morstan so she could get her portion. They arrived at Bartholomew's house and find that he has died because he was shot with a poison dart, the treasure has been stolen, and the criminals left a note that says, "the sign of four." Sherlock Holmes realized that there were two people in the room, one with a wooden leg and the other with very small feet. He immediately got a dog to trace the scent of these people. The dog eventually led them to the water where the men took a steam launch named the Aurora.

Sherlock and Jones set up to pursue the Aurora with some other people on the police force. Jonathon Small is captured, but his small companion from Africa had to be killed because he was trying to kill Sherlock and the rest of the people on the ship. They find the treasure on the boat and Dr. Watson goes to take it to Ms. Morstan. However, when they open the box it is empty. Dr. Watson having feelings for Ms. Morstan is thankful because now she is not out of his league and they get engaged.

Jonathon Small tells Sherlock the whole story of the treasure. He was a guard in Agra. He commanded two men and one night they attacked him stating they would kill him or he had to help them kill the wealthy man with the treasure and become rich. Small agreed to help them and ended up killing the wealthy man. The four friends found a place to hide the dead body and the treasure. However, the men got caught for the murder and were sentenced

to imprisonment with hard labor for the rest of their lives. Smalls was then transferred to the Andaman Islands where Captain Morstan and Major Sholto were in charge.

Smalls noticed how Morstan was running out of money to play poker with his friends on the Island. He offered Morstan and Sholto a part of the treasure if Smalls could be free. They both agreed to this plan and Smalls gave Sholto the location of the treasure to make sure it was there before letting the convicts go. However, Sholto took the treasure back to England instead.

This is when Small met his companion, Tonga. Small saved Tonga's life and Tonga became very attached to Small. Tonga helped Small escape and they came back to England and found where Major Sholto lived and where the ones at his window when he died.

Then Small heard that the treasure had been discovered and went to Bartholomew's house immediately. Small could not get the treasure with his wooden leg and had Tonga do it. Small had planned to get the treasure while Bartholomew was out of the room eating his dinner, but when Tonga arrived he was still there. Tonga killed Bartholomew and they left with the treasure. After Small concludes his tale, he is taken into custody and the police force takes all of the credit for Sherlock's work. Watson asks Holmes what he will get out of solving the case and Sherlock replies that he still has his cocaine.

The major theme in this book is justice. Jonathan Small wants justice because Major Sholto took his treasure. Sherlock Holmes wants justice because he is a detective and wants to help Ms. Morstan. Both the protagonist and antagonist want justice in some shape or form and eventually find it.

### 3. The Hound of Baskervilles

The Hound of the Baskervilles opens with a mini mystery—Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson speculate on the identity of the owner of a cane that has been left in their office by an unknown visitor. Wowing Watson with his fabulous powers of observation, Holmes predicts the appearance of James Mortimer, owner of the found object and a convenient entrée into the baffling curse of the Baskervilles.

Entering the office and unveiling an 18th century manuscript, Mortimer recounts the myth of the lecherous Hugo Baskerville. Hugo captured and imprisoned a young country lass at his estate in Devonshire, only to fall victim to a marauding hound of hell as he pursued her along the lonesome moors late one night. Ever since, Mortimer reports, the Baskerville line has been plagued by a mysterious and supernatural black hound. The recent death of Sir Charles Baskerville has rekindled suspicions and fears. The next of kin, the duo finds out, has arrived in London to take up his post at Baskerville Hall, but he has already been intimidated by an anonymous note of warning and, strangely enough, the theft of a shoe.

Agreeing to take the case, Holmes and Watson quickly discover that Sir Henry Baskerville is being trailed in London by a mysterious bearded stranger, and they speculate as to whether the ghost be friend or foe. Holmes, however, announces that he is too busy in London to accompany Mortimer and Sir Henry to Devonshire to get to the bottom of the case, and he sends Dr. Watson to be his eyes and ears, insisting that he report back regularly.

Once in Devonshire, Watson discovers a state of emergency, with armed guards on the watch for an escaped convict roaming the moors. He meets potential suspects in Mr. Barrymore and Mrs. Barrymore, the domestic help, and Mr. Jack Stapleton and his sister Beryl, Baskerville neighbors.

A series of mysteries arrive in rapid succession: Barrymore is caught skulking around the mansion at night; Watson spies a lonely figure keeping watch over the moors; and the doctor hears what sounds like a dog's howling. Beryl Stapleton provides an enigmatic warning and Watson learns of a secret encounter between Sir Charles and a local woman named Laura Lyons on the night of his death.

Doing his best to unravel these threads of the mystery, Watson discovers that Barrymore's nightly jaunts are just his attempt to aid the escaped con, who turns out to be Mrs. Barrymore's brother. The doctor interviews Laura Lyons to assess her involvement, and discovers that the lonely figure surveying the moors is none other than Sherlock Holmes himself. It takes Holmes—hidden so as not to tip off the villain as to his involvement—to piece together the mystery.

Mr. Stapleton, Holmes has discovered, is actually in line to inherit the Baskerville fortune, and as such is the prime suspect. Laura Lyons was only a pawn in Stapleton's game, a Baskerville beneficiary whom Stapleton convinced to request and then miss a late night

appointment with Sir Charles. Having lured Charles onto the moors, Stapleton released his ferocious pet pooch, which frightened the superstitious nobleman and caused a heart attack.

In a dramatic final scene, Holmes and Watson use the younger Baskerville as bait to catch Stapleton red-handed. After a late supper at the Stapletons', Sir Henry heads home across the moors, only to be waylaid by the enormous Stapleton pet. Despite a dense fog, Holmes and Watson are able to subdue the beast, and Stapleton, in his panicked flight from the scene, drowns in a marshland on the moors. Beryl Stapleton, who turns out to be Jack's harried wife and not his sister, is discovered tied up in his house, having refused to participate in his dastardly scheme.

Back in London, Holmes ties up the loose ends, announcing that the stolen shoe was used to give the hound Henry's scent, and that mysterious warning note came from Beryl Stapleton, whose philandering husband had denied their marriage so as to seduce and use Laura Lyons. Watson files the case closed.

#### **4. The Valley of Fear**

The novel *The Valley of Fear* by Arthur Conan Doyle is a captivating mystery about the murder of a man who calls himself by the name of John Douglas. A sawed-off shotgun blast to the head carried out the gruesome killing. John Douglas was found in his study, face mangled on the floor with a card laid beside his body and a hammer laying feet from the crime. John Douglas and his wife lived in the Manor House of Birlstone which surrounded by water acquired a draw bridge that was raised at sunset every evening. Every night Douglas did his rounds checking the house's safety through every room. Around 11 p.m., when Douglas made his round to the study he was shot dead. As Holmes and Watson investigated the crime, behind the curtain there were muddy footprints appearing as if the murderer was hiding. On the window sill there was a bloodstain from a shoe print. The window was opened and one of the two dumb bells was missing. The draw bridge being raised around six p.m. and the killing occurring at 11 p.m. Holmes figured that the murderer could not have entered the house any later than 6 or before 4 o'clock due to the arrival of guests. As the two detectives were investigating the housekeeper, a good friend of the Douglas's and, Douglas's wife, they found that Cecil Barker, the good friend of John Douglas seemed to act peculiar when questions were being asked. As did John Douglas's wife. One would think that the wife of the murdered husband would be exceptionally melancholy but this was not the case and it appeared as if she was faking her emotions. Holmes recognized Barker's footprint and saw that it was his shoes that made the muddy and bloodstains. Barker claimed that a secret society found Douglas. Douglas had a very unique background.

In the town of Vermissa Valley murder and criminal rate was very high and it was governed by a man named BodyMaster McGinty. He ordered his followers on whom to kill and take care of. John McMurdo arrived in Vermissa and became one of his followers. He



became the most intelligent and clever man in the two and was well-known. A detective named Birdy Edwards supposedly was arriving in town to investigate how McGinty was taking care of things. McMurdo set a plan to capture Edwards so he couldn't investigate. McMurdo reveals that he is Birdy Edwards and throws some of the criminals in jail and sentences the majority to the death. Vermissa was now free of criminals and a safer place to live in. He ran away to England to escape the criminals who were after him. He changed his name to John Douglas and married his wife.

Sherlock Holmes informed Cecil Barker that he was draining the moat and Holmes watched from a distance while Barker fished up a bundle and in the end was the missing dumb bell. The bundle was a pair of clothes that matched the missing convict's clothing. Mr. Douglas appears and explains that he ran into an old enemy from the Valley of Fear and he tried to kill Douglas. Douglas killed the enemy and dressed him up as himself, threw his clothes in the moat, and hid in the basement for days. He did this to protect himself against further crime. Mrs. Douglas and Barker helped make this possible. Sherlock Holmes informs Douglas that a greater threat is above him from Professor Moriarty and he should leave England. However, when Douglas left England he was mysteriously lost overboard on the vessel that would have brought him to Africa.