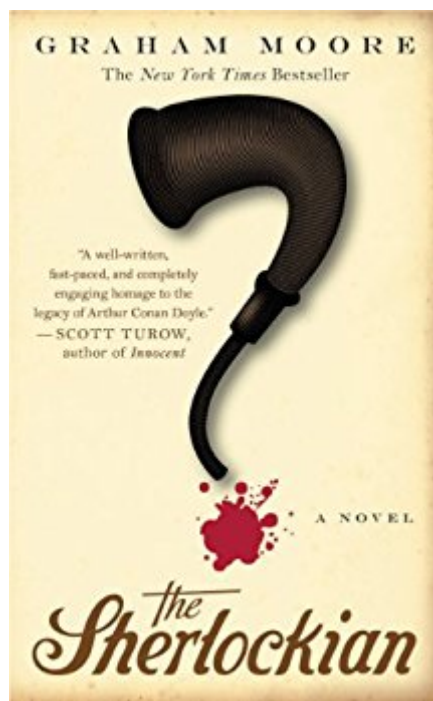


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The Sherlockian



Synopsis

In December 1893, Sherlock Holmes-adoring Londoners eagerly opened their Strand magazines, anticipating the detective's next adventure, only to find the unthinkable: his creator, Arthur Conan Doyle, had killed their hero off. London spiraled into mourning -- crowds sported black armbands in grief -- and railed against Conan Doyle as his assassin. Then in 1901, just as abruptly as Conan Doyle had "murdered" Holmes in "The Final Problem," he resurrected him. Though the writer kept detailed diaries of his days and work, Conan Doyle never explained this sudden change of heart. After his death, one of his journals from the interim period was discovered to be missing, and in the decades since, has never been found. Or has it? When literary researcher Harold White is inducted into the preeminent Sherlock Holmes enthusiast society, The Baker Street Irregulars, he never imagines he's about to be thrust onto the hunt for the holy grail of Holmes-ophiles: the missing diary. But when the world's leading Doylean scholar is found murdered in his hotel room, it is Harold - using wisdom and methods gleaned from countless detective stories - who takes up the search, both for the diary and for the killer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Graham Moore has written a novel that takes place in two different periods: the turn of the 20th century - which was the end of the Victorian era in England - and the increasingly muddled present. Loosely based on real events, this fascinating novel suggests that the era in which Sherlock Holmes and his creator flourished exists in a kind-of golden glow in our modern imagination. According to Moore the primal source of the mystery story is an innate need to know that lays deep within us all. And the protagonists in both eras actively involve themselves in two great mysteries. In 1900 Arthur Conan Doyle figuratively dons the mantle of his creation Sherlock Holmes. He is aided by his close friend Bram Stoker (the author of Dracula) who serves as a fiercely loyal stand-in for Watson. The two writers are thrust into a dangerous search for the murderer of several young women. It is nearly the end of Conan Doyle's self-imposed 7 year long hiatus from new Sherlock tales following the 'death' of Holmes at the hands of Professor Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls. It is also a period of political upheaval in which women are demanding the right to vote while men - and Conan Doyle is one of the most vocal opponents - seem solidly entrenched in opposition. The nascent modern era appears to have been crystallized in these events as the hideous murders that Conan Doyle and Bram Stoker pursue reveal several bitter surprises. In 2010 a top Holmes scholar claims to have discovered Conan Doyle's long-sought diary covering those first few crucial months in 1900. The diary quickly disappeared after Conan Doyle's mysterious entries and remained lost for more than a century. Soon after the announcement of this critical discovery the scholar is found murdered.

Brief summary and review, no spoilers. This story is told in alternating chapters, starting off in the 1883 as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is contemplating killing off his fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes. The next chapter takes us to the present as we are introduced to Harold White, who has recently been invited to be a member of the prestigious Baker Street Irregulars. He is the youngest member, and he has earned his invitation by his extensive knowledge of all things regarding Holmes and by his having written an article in the Irregulars' quarterly publication called The Baker Street Journal. To say he is excited is an understatement. As we go back and forth in time in these alternating chapters, we follow Arthur Conan Doyle (teamed up with his friend, Dracula author Bram Stoker) as they investigate a serial killer. We see how Doyle was castigated by Holmes fans for killing their hero, and we find out why years later, Doyle brings Holmes back to life in The Hound of the Baskervilles. We also find out why he wrote the diary which went missing for so many years. In the chapters that take place in the present time, Harold White also becomes involved in the investigation of a murder of a member of the Baker Street Irregulars - one who purportedly had a long missing and much sought after diary from Arthur Conan Doyle. Along with his "Watson", a

young woman named Sarah, we resolve the mystery and find out what happened to that diary. If you are a big fan of Sherlock Holmes and you are familiar with Doyle's stories and novels I think you will enjoy this book. I thought the alternating chapter technique was used effectively, and I liked that.

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