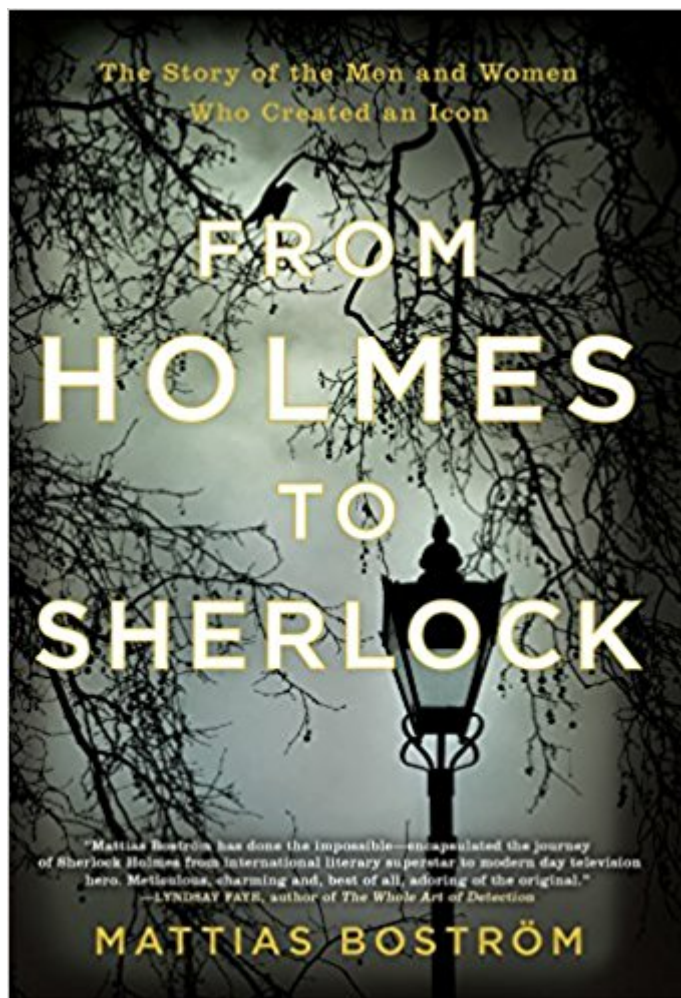


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# From Holmes To Sherlock: The Story Of The Men And Women Who Created An Icon



## Synopsis

"Mattias Bostrom has done the impossible--encapsulated the journey of Sherlock Holmes from international literary superstar to modern day television hero."--Lyndsay Faye

Everyone knows Sherlock Holmes. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created a unique literary character who has remained popular for over a century and is appreciated more than ever today. But what made this fictional character, dreamed up by a small-town English doctor in the 1880s, into such a lasting success, despite the author's own attempt to escape his invention?

In *From Holmes to Sherlock*, Swedish author and Sherlock Holmes expert Mattias Bostrom recreates the full story behind the legend for the first time. From a young Arthur Conan Doyle sitting in a Scottish lecture hall taking notes on his medical professor's powers of observation to the pair of modern-day fans who brainstormed the idea behind the TV sensation *Sherlock*, from the publishing world's first literary agent to the Georgian princess who showed up at the Conan Doyle estate and altered a legacy, the narrative follows the men and women who have created and perpetuated the myth. It includes tales of unexpected fortune, accidental romance, and inheritances gone awry, and tells of the actors, writers, readers, and other players who have transformed Sherlock Holmes from the gentleman amateur of the Victorian era to the odd genius of today. Told in fast-paced, novelistic prose, *From Holmes to Sherlock* is a singular celebration of the most famous detective in the world--a must-read for newcomers and experts alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for *From Holmes to Sherlock*: A Publishers Weekly Top 10 in Essays & Literary Criticism for

fall 2017

“If you love Sherlock Holmes, you’ll love this book . . . Mattias Bostrom’s *From Holmes to Sherlock* is the best account of Baker Street mania ever written. Really . . . what Bostrom has accomplished supremely well is to relate, as his subtitle proclaims, the story of the men and women who created an icon. In effect, he shows us how Sherlock Holmes enchanted the world.

—Michael Dirda, *Washington Post*

“A timely overview of the great detective’s actual genesis and multiple transformation as a mass cultural icon . . . Riveting . . . Bostrom has expertly unearthed entertaining instances of the sleuth’s diverse appearances in all media, throughout the world . . . [A] wonderfully entertaining history.

—Michael Saler, *Wall Street Journal*

“From Holmes to Sherlock celebrates the versatility of one of fiction’s most beloved characters . . . terrific . . . Mattias Bostrom has written a necessary addition to any Baker Street library.

—Steve Donoghue, *Christian Science Monitor*

“For Sherlock Holmes buffs, there’s a new book I imagine is indispensable . . . Bostrom’s achievement is staggering and endearingly gossipy. It’s like eating popcorn and you learn a whole lot of cool stuff along the way.

—Nicholas Meyer

“Mattias Bostrom has done the impossible — encapsulated the journey of Sherlock Holmes from international literary superstar to modern day television hero. Meticulous, charming and, best of all, adoring of the original.

—Lyndsay Faye, author of *The Whole Art of Detection*

“Just when you think you’ve read every great book about the history of Doyle and Holmes, Mattias Bostrom reveals startling new layers to the famous adventures of the greatest detective of all time. Written with skill, wit, and unmatched expertise, *From Holmes to Sherlock* is the new standard in the complete history of not only the original Doyle stories, but literally every adaptation, too.

—Ryan Britt, author of *Luke Skywalker Can’t Read*

“A breathtakingly comprehensive study of a literary phenomenon . . . Mattias Bostrom has given us an epic narrative that despite its length and sheer poundage in paperback is unputdownable. Bravo.

—New York Journal of Books

“One of my favorite books of the year . . . you will enjoy Bostrom’s book enormously. It’s a delight to read, narrative history paced like a suspense novel . . . What I loved most about *From Holmes to Sherlock* is that you don’t have to be a Sherlock Holmes expert to enjoy it.

—Sarah Weinman, *Crime Lady*

“[Bostrom] comes up with some intriguing and fresh details . . . The canon of critical and biographical material on Holmes and Doyle is massive, of course, but even so, this latest entry makes a significant contribution to our understanding of how a bloodhound called Sherlock took over the world.

—Booklist (starred review)

“Entertaining,

enlightening . . . Each chapter is short, written in a punchy, eavesdropping style, so that even if you don't know the protagonists, their battles, failures and successes read like mini-mysteries . . . The chapters here are like a bag of salted peanuts – you can't stop at one. – Winnipeg Free Press – “A spirited account of how Sherlock became a household name . . . Boström's weaving of the Holmes story into the larger one of popular culture and the mass-entertainment industry is the best part of this very good book. For fans of literature, film history, and Conan Doyle alike, a fine complement to the best works of Sherlockiana. – Kirkus Reviews – “Boström has succeeded masterfully in doing something no one has hitherto dared try: telling the whole Sherlock Holmes 'story.' It is an extraordinary tale. – Nicholas Utechin, editor of the Sherlock Holmes Journal, 1976-2006 – “When next asked why you so love Sherlock Holmes, hand your interrogator a copy of this work. – Steven Rothman, Baker Street Journal” This ambitious work charting the history of Sherlock Holmes and Sherlockiana in all of its guises is the most important book on the Sherlockian bookshelf in the past several years. Mattias's research is impressive as is his breadth of knowledge. – Mark Alberstat, editor of Canadian Holmes – “Superb! I am deeply in awe of Mr Boström's comprehensive research, his meticulous selection and his enticing presentation. Mattias Boström is one of a select group of really important Holmesian/Doylean scholars. – Roger Johnson, editor of the Sherlock Holmes Journal, coauthor of the Sherlock Holmes Miscellany – “From Holmes to Sherlock will be one of the four or five most important books among the scores of nonfiction volumes about Sherlock Holmes, and it's easy and entertaining reading as well. – Christopher Redmond, editor of Sherlockian.net – [From Holmes to Sherlock] explores the world's continuing fascination with fiction's leading detective hero. The informal, accessible style of Gallagher's translation makes for an easy, if lengthy, read. – Publishers Weekly – [A] unique, incredibly ambitious and wide-ranging volume . . . While it reads like a work of fiction, almost a literary mystery, it is a rich tapestry, filled with real-world heroes and villains . . . I can't recommend this book highly enough . . . A must-read for anyone with an interest in the character, the history or the fandom surrounding him. – Canadian Holmes – “Well written and recommended. – Peter E. Blau, Scuttlebutt newsletter – “[An] excellent book. – Sherlock Holmes Society of London newsletter – “Mattias Boström . . . [has] written a book about Sherlock Holmes that is head and shoulders above anything we've seen lately . . . with a style and grace that leaves one nearly

speechless. Timothy J. Johnson, Curator of Special Collections and Rare Books,  
E. W. McDiarmid Curator of the Sherlock Holmes Collections

Mattias Boström, born in 1971, is a Swedish author, publisher, and Sherlock Holmes expert. He has written three books about Swedish popular culture history and has been an active Sherlockian for almost thirty years, publishing articles and editing books and booklets on the subject. He lives outside Stockholm with his wife and two young daughters.

So you've read all the Sherlock Holmes stories by Arthur Conan Doyle. You've enjoyed the vintage art of Sidney Paget and Frederic Dorr Steele that helped shape the image of Sherlock Holmes. You've watched Basil Rathbone in 14 films and maybe heard some of the radio plays written and produced by Edith Meiser. You've watched all the television episodes featuring Ronald Howard, Douglas Wilmer, Peter Cushing, Jeremy Brett, Benedict Cumberbatch or Jonny Lee Miller. You were astounded when the long thought lost 1916 film *Sherlock Holmes* with William Gillette was rediscovered and released to DVD a couple years ago. You may have read biographies of Arthur Conan Doyle, touching on his inspiration for Holmes via Joseph Bell, or his investigation of real life crimes, or guides to the actors who have played Holmes, or perhaps some of the beautifully illustrated surveys detailing art and artifacts associated with Sherlock Holmes. You may have heard about the Baker Street Irregulars and the role of Vincent Starrett, Christopher Morley and others in their establishment, read their publication *The Baker Street Journal*, the involvement of Presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, or know something about the squabbles between Doyle's heirs and the BSI, or that the BSI didn't allow women members until 1991. You may be a member of a local Sherlock Holmes society or book club. You've probably read any number of published pastiches including Ellery Queen's *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes* or Nick Meyer's game changing *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*, Mitch Cullin's *A Slight Trick of the Mind*, or more recent anthologies by Laurie King and Les Klinger, the last of which resulted in a huge public court case firmly putting the character (if not all the stories) of Sherlock Holmes in the public domain. You may have listened to podcasts by the Baker Street Babes celebrating the remarkable international success of the BBC's *Sherlock*, or attended one of the conventions, all of which have contributed to a global popularity, shift and resurgence in one of the oldest fandoms ever

encountered. Hell, you are probably even familiar with the ubiquitous tent joke. Or maybe you've not read or seen any of it and just have some vague curiosity about Sherlock Holmes? In any event, what you're probably wondering is how can I see the big picture? How does it all fit together? How does a simple detective character, created in 1887, manage to stay in the public eye and be a pop culture sensation, taking the world by storm, some 130 years later? Mattias Boström's unique, incredibly ambitious and wide ranging volume *From Holmes to Sherlock: The Story of the Men and Women Who Created an Icon* aims to answer that question. This isn't a straight-up history, nor is it a biography of any one individual, instead it is an examination of the entire Sherlock Holmes phenomenon; tracing the steps from inception in the mind of Arthur Conan Doyle right through to the people and events that shaped the latest film and television extravaganzas, all presented in a chronological narrative form. The book is exactly what it claims to be in the subtitle, it is literally *The Story of the Men and Women Who Created an Icon*. By utilizing the narrative story form, rather than a dry historical format, Boström makes the reader part of the events as they unfold and gives us a better sense of the key players as what they are, or were; real live human beings with all the foibles, quirks and flaws that implies. While it reads like a work of fiction, almost a literary mystery, it is a rich tapestry, filled with real-world heroes and villains, and Boström, using a wealth of facts as foundation (Boström and Matt Laffey have been exhaustively researching newspaper archives for mentions of Holmes and Conan Doyle for a series of books, currently up to three volumes, called *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle in the Newspapers*, published by Wessex Press), extrapolates and provides us with scenes that make us privy to the thoughts and motivations behind their actions. The chatty, almost gossipy style, is engaging, almost deceptively masking the wealth of information the reader is being handed, but never loses the thread of the story at its heart. While you will meet an almost bewildering array of people and cover 130 years worth of events, vignettes, tales of greed and heartbreak, Boström puts it all together in a cohesive form that is never less than compelling and will have you turning pages at the pace of a Dan Brown thriller. Whether you're familiar with the elements of the history of Sherlock Holmes in print and media, or a complete newcomer, I guarantee you'll learn something new in this monumental work that explores the big picture of the Sherlock Holmes phenomenon and how it came to be. Bottom line: I cannot recommend this highly enough, as *From Holmes to Sherlock: The Story of the Men and Women Who Created an Icon* is likely the most important work

connected to Sherlock Holmes to be published in 2017 and a must-read for anyone with an interest in the character, the history or the fandom surrounding him. Note: Review based on an uncorrected proof provided on January 7, 2017. As such no remarks regarding typos (there aren't many) or irregularities in style (this work has been translated from Swedish) have been noted in this review as they may be corrected before publication.

Upon finishing this, all I can say is "wow." That being said, I did have a bit of a difficult time reading it, not because it was an ARC, but because it was so badly formatted as an Kindle e-book that the truncated paragraphs and wrap-around short texts ruined the rhythm of the author's words, and because it covers such a varied cast of characters. If you think this is your run-of-the-mill "how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes" yarn, you'll be in for a surprise: while the beginning of the book does follow that formula, the rest of the story follows how Holmes became a literary phenomenon even after Doyle's death, and the people who kept him alive: a boy named Kit who devours all the stories and grows up to be Christopher Morley, Doyle's sons Adrian and Denis, who hope to make a living off Holmes while keeping their father's memory alive (neither of them come off particularly well in this book – Adrian is money grubbing and Denis an alcoholic and spendthrift, with a Russian wife who's just as bad), the Baker Street Irregulars and their anti-female attitude, actors like the infamous William Gillette, Basil Rathbone, Peter Cushing, Arthur Wontner, even the 1980s Russian Holmes, women like Edith Meiser, writer for the classic American Holmes radio series, just one of Holmes' female fans who fought to break into the "old boys club" that originally was Holmes fandom, and even Eve Titus, who wrote the "Basil of Baker Street" pastiches for children, and finally ending with Robert Downey Jr, Jeremy Brett, all the way down to Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat plotting out a modern-day Sherlock on a train. There are lots of interesting tidbits tossed your way in this book, but you must be a Holmes fan to completely appreciate it. Boström has done an enormous amount of research and it shows, but the writing (or perhaps the translation) is at times almost too cut-and-dried. Rewards abound if you stick with it. And I hope the finished Kindle copy is better than the ARC I read.

Sherlock Holmes has been a cultural icon on both sides of the Atlantic since his first appearance in *Study in Scarlet* in the 1887 Beeton's Christmas Annual. The famous consulting detective has occupied nearly every aspect of popular culture; from magazines, to books, to comic strips, to Broadway musicals, to movies and television shows. Sherlock Holmes has fought criminal masterminds, spectral hounds, nazis, Jack the Ripper, eldritch horrors, and vampires. His name and

his legend have taken on quite a life of their own, and Holmes seems to exist almost entirely separate from the man who created him. In *From Holmes to Sherlock*, Boström takes us from young Arthur Conan Doyle taking studious notes in lecture with Dr. Joseph Bell at the University of Edinburgh, through to the modern hit BBC television series *Sherlock*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman. The century and a half span encompasses two world wars, the Great Depression, the advent of radio, the golden age of Hollywood, and the ubiquity of television. We see Conan Doyle trying desperately to rein in a creation that broke free from his control even in the earliest days. We see his heirs try desperately to retain some aspect of their father's greatest work. We see how the world has made Sherlock Holmes their own, through countless books, movies, plays, and dedicated societies. This is a must-read for any fans of Sherlock Holmes. Boström has written a comprehensive and fascinating history of one of the most popular fictional characters of all time. The book is rich in detail and engagingly told, and should not be missed by anyone who wants more information about the world's greatest consulting detective. An advance copy of this book was provided by the publisher via Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.

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