



The biography

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

(1859-1930)

THE BIOGRAPHY CONAN DOYLE

- Arthur Conan Doyle was born on 22 May 1859, in Edinburgh, Scotland, to an English father of Irish descent, Charles Altamont Doyle, and an Irish mother, née Mary Foley, who had married in 1855.
- The Doyle family was a large one—Arthur was one of ten children of which seven survived to adulthood.
- The Doyle family were Catholic.





- Arthur entered Hodder Prep, a Jesuit-run school, in 1868. Two years later, he moved to Stonyhurst public school, another Jesuit-run educational institution. At Stonyhurst, he was noted for his untidiness and his determination to go his own way.



- In 1874, Arthur took and passed his university matriculation exam. Before entering Edinburgh University in 1876, he spent a year at a Jesuit school in Austria brushing up on his German. A lack of money during school required him to take outside jobs to earn money for tuition. During the summer of 1878, he worked with a doctor in general practice.





- Charles Doyle, Arthur's father, entered a nursing home in 1879, suffering from epilepsy and alcoholism. This was hard on the Doyle family. Arthur worked in a Shropshire country practice to earn extra money to send home to his family.



He doubled up on his studies so he could spend more time working. In the same year, Arthur sold his first short story to Chambers' Journal.



- The year 1880 saw Arthur working for a Birmingham doctor as a dispenser. In his spare time he read widely in spiritualism and metaphysical literature. The spiritualist movement eventually came to rule his life. He signed on as a surgeon on an Arctic whaling ship for seven months. He became the captain's companion, breaking up fights among the seamen. He learned to be a skilled harpooner. This experience toughened him up physically and mentally.



- Arthur received his Masters in Biology in 1881.
- Arthur received his M.D. in 1885. Upon graduating, he traveled by cargo steamer to Africa. Upon his return from Africa, Arthur moved to Southsea where he set up as a GP.





- Arthur wrote adventure stories to earn extra money. He rented Bush Villa in Southsea, which became his residence as well as his practice. Business was slow for the first six months. Arthur joined football, bowling, political, literary, and cricket clubs in his leisure time. Business began to pick up.



- In August of 1885 Arthur married Louise Hawkins. She remained a background figure throughout the marriage. The Doyles were married for fifteen years before Louise died in 1900 of tuberculosis. Two children were born into this union; a boy and a girl.





- Shortly after the marriage, Dr. Doyle began practicing medicine as an eye specialist. His first Sherlock Holmes story was published in 1887. Sherlock Holmes was based on Edgar Allan Poe's detective C. Holmes' physical appearance was that of Dr. Joseph Bell, Doyle's teacher from the University of Edinburgh. His surname came from Oliver Wendell Holmes, an American poet admired by Doyle.



- Arthur's first historical novel was published in 1889. He was living in London in 1890 and practicing as an occultist. By 1891, he had become a full time writer.



In 1892, the first collection of Sherlock Holmes stories was published. A total of five collections of Holmes stories have been published.



- Charles Altamont Doyle, Arthur's father, died in 1893 in the nursing home he had been committed to in 1879. In the same year as his father's death, Doyle decided to kill off Sherlock Holmes. Doyle was tired of writing short stories. He wanted to be remembered for his historical novels rather than his detective. So, in 1894, Arthur Conan Doyle officially killed off Sherlock Holmes, one of the greatest literary detectives ever to live.





- During the South African War, from 1899-1902, Doyle served as senior physician at a field hospital for a short time. In 1900, he ran unsuccessfully for Parliament for the first time. He was knighted in 1902, making him Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In 1903, at the request of his government and by public demand, Sherlock Holmes was resurrected for a story involving a secret mission for the government during a time of war.





- In 1906, Doyle ran unsuccessfully for Parliament a second time. The year 1907 found Arthur marrying for the second time. Jean Leckie was to bless Doyle with three children and a devotion to his spiritualist movement.





- 1917 was to be the last year a Sherlock Holmes story was published. By 1920, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was one of the highest paid writers in the world.





- Arthur Conan Doyle died on Monday, July 7, 1930, surrounded by his family. His last words before departing for "the greatest and most glorious adventure of all," were addressed to his wife. He whispered, "You are wonderful."