



# Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle

By Daniel Stashower

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This fresh, compelling biography examines the extraordinary life and strange contrasts of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the struggling provincial doctor who became the most popular storyteller of his age. From his youthful exploits aboard a whaling ship to his often stormy friendships with such figures as Harry Houdini and George Bernard Shaw, Conan Doyle lived a life as gripping as one of his adventures. Exhaustively researched and elegantly written, Teller of Tales sets aside many myths and misconceptions to present a vivid portrait of the man behind the legend of Baker Street, with a particular emphasis on the Psychic Crusade that dominated his final years-the work that Conan Doyle himself felt to be "the most important thing in the world."

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## **Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle** By Daniel Stashower Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #722426 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Henry Holt and Co.
- Published on: 1999-04-13
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.52" h x 1.53" w x 6.60" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 496 pages

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Despite (or because of) the tremendous success of his Sherlock Holmes stories, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle always tended to play down their value and importance in his life. Just before his death in 1930, he drew a memorable sketch of his life's work. Conan Doyle portrayed events from his life as a series of packing cases being loaded onto a wagon and pulled by a flea-bitten workhorse. Perhaps the heaviest case of all, notes Daniel Stashower in his fascinating biography *Teller of Tales*, is the one that reads "Sherlock Holmes."

Stashower's intent is to show that Conan Doyle was *not* Sherlock Holmes, and that his life consisted of much more than the now ridiculed spiritualism to which he devoted much of his later years. He succeeds to a surprising degree, convincing us that *The White Company* and *Sir Nigel* (forgotten novels that Conan Doyle thought were his best) are indeed worth reading. As for the spiritualism, Stashower meticulously places his subject's long fascination with it into a compassionate and fully researched social context. We come away certain that Conan Doyle (along with many other worthy citizens of the period) really believed in it. --*Dick Adler*

#### From Kirkus Reviews

An elementary life of the writer, historian, and activist who wanted to be remembered as more than just the creator of Sherlock Holmes. Novelist Stashower (*Elephants in the Distance*, 1989, etc.), like many fans of the Great Detective, is somewhat disappointed that Holmes creator tried so hard to live him down. Still, Conan Doyle's latest biographer has immersed himself in all his works, from Professor Challenger's proto-sci-fi adventures, Brigadier Gerard's Napoleonic exploits, and assorted historical novels, to his detailed nonfiction and obsessive Spiritualist output not to mention, also, the author's phenomenally active life. The origins of Holmes are well enough known: for example, how the young Edinburgh-trained doctor, languishing in a Portsmouth practice, decided to write a detective story, basing his hero on his old medical school lecturer, Dr. Joseph Bell. Stashower offers no revelations about this or other aspects of Conan Doyle's early life, though by keeping a clear sense of context, he does scour the self-deprecation that Conan Doyle cast over them later. Indeed, if Conan Doyle had not made the serious career error of trying to start an ophthalmology practice in London, Stashower argues, he might well have remained a general practitioner with a literary sideline. Even as Sherlock Holmes took off in the Strand magazine, the author valued other projects more, such as his historical novels. And as he turned his prodigious energies to other interests for instance, skiing in the Swiss Alps, running for a seat in Parliament, enlisting as a medical officer in the Boer War, campaigning against wrongful convictions (notably the cases of George Edalji and Oscar Slater), and finally, Spiritualism Stashower can suggest only that Conan Doyle's crusading zeal served as a replacement for his early, lost Catholic faith and that his belief in the Cottingley fairy hoax could be rooted in his institutionalized father's own fancies. A doggedly thorough investigation, though missing a few psychological clues. (b&w photos, not seen) -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

#### Review

"A gripping sympathetic bio that proves that Doyle was anything but elementary." (Entertainment Weekly)

"An appealing and much-needed biography of the man who created one of literature's renowned eccentrics." (The Wall Street Journal)

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Muriel Carpenter:**

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children right up until adult are different content. As we know that book is very important normally. The book Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle seemed to be making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It doesn't matter what advantages for you. The publication Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle is not only giving you much more new information but also to get your friend when you truly feel bored. You can spend your spend time to read your guide. Try to make relationship while using book Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle. You never experience lose out for everything in case you read some books.

#### **Teresa Riggs:**

The reason? Because this Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will jolt you with the secret the item inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who have write the book in such awesome way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book get such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking way. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

#### **Susan Hare:**

The book untitled Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy way. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do definitely not worry, you can easy to read that. The book was published by famous author. The author gives you in the new period of literary works. You can read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or product, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site and also order it. Have a nice go through.

#### **Stephen Comerford:**

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