



Sherlock Holmes in America

Martin H. Greenberg (Editor) , Jon Lellenberg (Editor) , Daniel Stashower (Editor) , Lyndsay Faye (Contributor) , Lloyd Rose (Contributor) , Steve Hockensmith (Contributor) , Robert Pohle (Contributor) , Loren D. Estleman (Contributor) , more... Victoria Thompson (Contributor) , Gillian Linscott (Contributor) , Bill Crider (Contributor) , Paula Cohen (Contributor) , Matthew Pearl (Contributor) , Carolyn Wheat (Contributor) , Jon L. Breen (Contributor) , Christopher Redmond (Contributor) , Arthur Conan Doyle (Contributor) , Michael Walsh (Contributor) ...less

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Sherlock Holmes makes his American debut in this fascinating and extraordinary collection of never-before-published crime and mystery stories by bestselling American writers. The world's greatest detective and his famous sidekick Watson are on their first trip across the Atlantic as they fight crime all over nineteenth-century North America. From the bustling neighborhoods of New York City and Washington, D.C., to sunny yet sinister cities like San Francisco on the West Coast, the world's best-loved British sleuth will face some of the most cunning criminals America has to offer, and meet some of America's most famous figures along the way. Each original story is written in the extraordinary tradition of Doyle's best work, yet each comes with a unique American twist that is sure to satisfy and exhilarate both Sherlock Holmes purists and those who always wished that Holmes could nab the nefarious closer to home. This is a must-read for any mystery fan and for those who have followed Holmes' illustrious career over the waterfall and back again.

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Tinneal says

I'm beginning to notice a trend of short-story collections putting their strongest stories at the beginning of the collection, which gets my hopes up, only to find that the stories become less and less enjoyable as it goes on. This collection was no exception.

I enjoyed reading the various interpretations of Holmes, Watson, and Mycroft by the various authors who contributed to this collection. Some chose to make Holmes love America, and some chose to make him despise it.

The Case of Colonel Warburton's Madness, by Lyndsay Faye: My main motive for getting my hands on this collection, was to read another Sherlockian work by the lovely and wonderfully talented Lyndsay Faye. I was not disappointed! This story addresses one of the unchronicled cases mentioned in the canon. Watson tells a bored Holmes of a mystery he encountered and was never able to solve himself, while practicing medicine in San Francisco. He challenges Holmes to solve it without leaving his chair, as a way to keep his mind busy and save him from descending into one of his black moods. Holmes is, of course, able to solve the mystery without leaving his chair. Both Holmes and Watson are perfectly in character, the narrative mirrors that of Doyle extremely well, and the mystery itself is very well done. Watson is compassionate and empathetic, and Holmes is impressive with his deductions. **[5 out of 5 stars]**

Ghosts and the Machine by Lloyd Rose: This story features Sherlock and Mycroft in their youth, while on a tour of New England. There they encounter Colonel Henry Olcott, who is investigating some suspicious 'psychic' events at the spiritualist shows of the Eddy brothers. Well-written, in diary form and from Mycroft's point-of-view. **[4 out of 5 stars]**

Excerpts from an Unpublished Memoir Found in the Basement of the Home for Retired Actors by Steve Hockensmith: This story is told from the point of view of a fellow actor in an English theatre company, during their travels through a small American town. The narrator tells of one frustrating and annoying member of their troupe, referred only to as 'The Welp', who they want out of their group. Although The Welp's real name is never given, it's quite obvious that it is a young Sherlock Holmes. I found this story very amusing and spent a lot of the read with a smile on my face. **[5 out of 5 stars]**

The Flowers of Utah by Robert Pohle: This story features Holmes and Watson going to Utah to look for the man who had disguised himself as a woman in order to assist Jefferson Hope in retrieving the wedding ring from Holmes, as they tie up the final details of the case featured in the canonical story A Study in Scarlet. The potential for a good story was there, and it certainly had its moments, but overall I found it to be rather flat. The ending of this story also retroactively changed Doyle's plot in A Study in Scarlet. **[2 out of 5 stars]**

The Adventure of the Coughing Dentist by Loren D Estleman: This story also uses the idea of Holmes and Watson going to America to tie up loose ends from A Study in Scarlet. Once in America, the two meet Wyatt Earp, and help him clear Doc Holiday of false murder charges. As someone who grew up with western novels, and loving the great western-American legends like Wyatt Earp and Doc Holiday, this 'cross-over' type story made me very happy. To put two literary characters of such difference into one story and have it be convincing, was wonderful. I also liked how Holmes and Watson's friendship was still in the early stages, and it seemed to grow quite a bit during this story. **[3 out of 5 stars]**

The Minister's Missing Daughter by Victoria Thompson: This is a mystery whose ending is rather obvious early on, although I think the point of it was to show that the assumptions made by members of the community had been rendered bias by their familiarity of the girl, and they needed to bring in a different perspective (in this case, Holmes) in order to see the truth. **[2 out of 5 stars]**

The Case of Colonel Crockett's Violin: A few people all claim to have the violin that once belonged to the legendary Davy Crockett. Holmes is brought in to be the final say on which is the real, authentic one, and all the clients try to ply Holmes with bribes and stories in an attempt to convince him that their violin is the one rescued from The Alamo. **[2 out of 5 stars]**

The Adventure of the White City by Bill Crider: While some of the stories in this collection seem to drag on, this one in particular seemed very rushed. It takes place in Chicago during the World's Columbian Exposition. It had a lot of potential, and I think it could have been much better had the author been given a higher word count. **[2 out of 5 stars]**

Recalled to Life by Paula Cohen: This story takes place during The Great Hiatus. Holmes is in New York and ends up helping to restore the career of a former detective who was framed for crimes, and lost everything as a result. Although not your typical Holmes story, it's a very satisfying read. **[4 out of 5 stars]**

The Seven Walnuts by Daniel Stashower: Harry Houdini uses his obsession with Holmes' methods to solve a murder. Neither Holmes nor Watson appear at all in the story. A Holmes-inspired story rather than a straight-up Sherlock Holmes adventure. **[1 out of 5 stars]**

The Adventure of the Boston Dromino by Matthew Pearl: A complex mystery where Holmes helps an old friend of Watson's, who has been framed for the murder of his housemaid. The story seemed to drag a bit, and the solution seemed to rely a bit more on luck than actual Sherlockian deductions, but overall I enjoyed it.
[3 out of 5 stars]

The Case of the Royal Queens by Carolyn Wheat: This story was boring and there was too much description. I don't really remember enough about it to make a thoughtful review. **[1 out of 5 stars]**

The Adventure of the Missing Three Quarters by Jon L Breen: Anyone who has read the canon will recognise the title. The story is told by a journalist who shows Holmes around Chicago. He then introduces Holmes to his friend, who is a football coach for UC. The story is good, although I think I would have enjoyed it more, had I been a fan of American football. Although even someone who is not familiar with the game will appreciate Holmes' skills of observation, as well as the final twist. **[3 out of 5 stars]**

The Song at Twilight by Michael Breathnach: This story is the author's attempts to write the events leading up to the canonical Holmes story His Last Bow. The story is told from the perspective of Holmes, and does not feature Watson, although Mycroft Holmes makes a few appearances. The premise had potential, but Holmes seems very out of character in these stories, as he falls in love, and kills a man in the name of personal vengeance. The narrative is good, but the inaccurate characterisations make the story much less enjoyable. **[2 out of 5 stars]**

The last three entries in this collection are non-fiction essays rather than stories.

Moriarty, Moran, and More: Anti-Hibernian Sentiment in the Canon by Michael Walsh: A essay on how Doyle supposedly hated the Irish. It almost reads like satire but I really can't tell. I'm also not sure what

an essay like this is doing in a collection about America, especially when there's so much discussion potential around Doyle's opinion on Mormons. [1 out of 5 stars]

How the Creator of Sherlock Holmes Brought Him to America by Christopher Redmond An account of Doyle's tours of America. [2 out of 5 stars]

The Romance of America by Conan Doyle: Two pages of Doyle speaking of America's beauty. I was pretty indifferent to this, but I'll give it 3 out of 5 stars because this collection really needs the extra points. [3 out of 5 stars]

Patty says

"Some readers may balk at finding the Great Detective uprooted from his familiar Baker Street digs, but we believe we are playing the game according to Doyle" p. vi

I am not a purist when it comes to Holmes. I read and enjoy all of Laurie R. King's novels and she has Sherlock married to a much younger woman. I have read other stories that feature Holmes and as long as they are well told, I am happy.

So for most of my listening, I had a great time with this collection. The fourteen stories are well written and then well-read by Graeme Malcolm. My drive around town was enhanced by this audio.

I bought this title on Audible based on the fact that it won the Audie Award for short stories in 2014. So, I was a bit surprised by the fact that there were three essays at the end. That was entirely my fault for not paying attention. Once I realized that Michael Walsh, who wrote the first essay, was not telling me another tale about Holmes, but rather some history about Doyle, I was prepared for the other essays.

The editors of this collection may be writing stories that Arthur Conan Doyle would approve, but I am not sure all Baker Street Irregulars would want the great Sherlock Holmes spending much time in the United States. For the strictest Holmes lover these stories probably stretch the limits.

If you can get over the fact that these stories are not written by Doyle, then I recommend this book for those who like short stories, who are willing for characters to learn new tricks and who like well produced audiobooks.

Mike Hovis says

A Fine Collection of Stories About The Great Detective

This is a delightful collection of stories by different authors. The stories themselves are imaginative and engaging. I especially enjoyed Christopher Redmond's brief history of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's first visit to America near the end of the book as well as Sir Arthur's words about America in the article "The Romance Of America" at the end of the book. This book is a good read for fans of Sherlock Holmes.

Steven says

3 Stars is "I liked it" an average book (3 of 5 is in the middle). One does need to have read the original Doyle stories and have a toleration for other writers trying to write stories that are set in a past they never lived in, who are using a small amount of real historical people, and are equal parts too reverent and too cavalier to the original stores. All of the characters do IMHO act "in character".

Amy Sturgis says

On the whole this is a far better than average collection of Sherlockian stories. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing how the different authors opted to bring Holmes to the States while respecting Conan Doyle's canon. The best tales here are excellent, most are good, and few are disappointments.

Lyndsay Faye's "The Case of Colonel Warburton's Madness" tackles one of the canonical unchronicled cases with great success, underscoring not only Holmes's impressive deductive abilities, but also Watson's inherent decency and empathy. It's a delight to have Watson relate an unsolved mystery from his days in San Francisco to help his friend battle crippling boredom. San Francisco's a compelling character here. Given how much I enjoyed Faye's *Dust and Shadow*, I'm unsurprised that I liked this so much.

In "Ghosts and the Machine," Lloyd Rose offers a fascinating glimpse into Mycroft's and Sherlock's younger years and relationship (from Mycroft's point of view, quite well done), as well as a poignant window into real-life characters from the history of the Spiritualist movement.

Steve Hockensmith's "Excerpts from an Unpublished Memoir Found in the Basement of the Home for Retired Actors" is a delight, both for the ridiculously self-important voice of its narrator and the its evocative descriptions of The Whelp (that is, a young Sherlock Holmes, "treading the boards" as a company player in the wilds of America). Great fun with lovely insights into a young but already recognizable Holmes.

Robert Pohle's "The Flowers of Utah" offers a "What if?" spin on some of the not-so-tied-up loose ends from "A Study in Scarlet," but it thinks it's cleverer than it is, and the payoff from the "infodump" doesn't justify abandoning the rest of the story as Pohle does. This fell rather flat for me, the first disappointment of a volume that's otherwise been excellent.

Loren D. Estleman's "The Adventure of the Coughing Dentist" has Holmes and Watson working with Wyatt Earp to prove Doc Holliday innocent of false charges of murder before he's lynched. The character voices are wonderful here, as is the portrait of the still young and growing friendship between Holmes and Watson.

Victoria Thompson in "The Minister's Missing Daughter" provides a mystery that's quite easily solved, but that's rather the point, as the community's and family's general assumptions about an exploited wallflower of a girl have blinded everyone from seeing the obvious truth about her fate. This is not a standout story, but it has its own quiet charm.

"The Case of Colonel Crockett's Violin" by Gillian Linscott is a story about Holmes and Watson in San Antonio determining which, among a field of several choices, is the authentic violin owned by Davy

Crockett and rescued from the Alamo. A solid effort.

Bill Crider's "The Adventure of the White City" needed to be about twice as long as it is to do justice to its ambitious premise (mixing the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, Wovoka, and the Ghost Dance). Although it felt rushed and very thin in patches, the main theme was more than worthy, and I appreciate the thought behind the not-quite-fully-realized story.

In "Recalled to Life," Paula Cohen offers a story from the Great Hiatus in which Holmes saves the career of a framed former New York detective. A very satisfying story and a compelling original character.

Daniel Stashower's "The Seven Walnuts" shows a Holmes-obsessed Harry Houdini and his brother employing the Great Detective's methods to solve a local mystery after Holmes's "death." Clever, but I missed Holmes and Watson.

Matthew Pearl's "The Adventure of the Boston Dromio" is a very satisfying and complex mystery showing Holmes at the height of his deductive powers as he helps Watson save the man who once saved Watson's life. Quite well done.

Carolyn Wheat's "The Case of the Royal Queens" is another good mystery, and it offers glimpses into both Holmes's past and his future life with bees. A solid and wryly told tale.

The May-December romance for Sherlock Holmes in Michael Breathnach's "The Song at Twilight" is a bit odd and not entirely convincing, but I do appreciate how the story fits into the canon of *The Valley of Fear* and "His Last Bow," and how it underscores the manner in which sovereign, country, and his brother all manipulate the aging and supposedly retired Sherlock Holmes.

Michael Walsh's essay is somewhat suggestive, if not persuasive, although I don't see how its theme (of anti-Hibernian sentiment in the canon) fits that of this volume. Christopher Redmond's piece on Doyle's travels in the United States is more descriptive than analytical, but it adds useful context to the focus of the collection. It's lovely that this volume ends with Conan Doyle's own comments on "The Romance of America."

Matt Kuhns says

For the newcomer or casual fan, this book is best passed up for something else; read a volume of the original stories or, if having done that, an annotated edition. For the student of moderate or greater interest, however, *Sherlock Holmes in America* is worth reading for a couple of reasons.

The first is that a handful of the tales are quite good. The volume starts out quite well, in fact, before devolving into a heap of largely unmemorable, indistinct "Holmes somewhere in America doing something" clunkers. But the best efforts are worth the price of admission, particularly that of Mr. Hockensmith, to which I would award the top prize.

A few of the lesser entries are not entirely devoid of "points of interest," either, but this category's greater virtue is the second reason to consider this volume: after reading its flattest, least inspired number, anyone who has ever entertained the briefest thought about experimenting with his or her own Holmes narrative may consider that *these* were selected for a commercially published anthology, and that one's own effort is unlikely to prove of much less worth...

Meaghan says

I admit to being rather disappointed with this book. I was looking for some creativity from the various authors, but found an astounding amount of dullness. A couple of the stories used the theme of "A Study in Scarlet" and had Holmes travelling to America to tie up loose ends in Utah from that case. Although I didn't mind the concept, I think that the stories themselves could have been more interesting. Another of the stories had Holmes in America as part of a travelling troupe of actors. Again, this story had potential if it hadn't been so easy to figure out, if the motive of the entire story hadn't been a ridiculous attempt to "get-even" with Holmes. The last of the stories that I particularly remember was written by an author whose books I have read. I was eager to see what she would do given the chance to write a Sherlock Holmes story. Unfortunately, she writes her own style of mystery much more intelligently than she writes a Sherlock Holmes short story. Though I did admire her readiness to poke fun at her own characters. In all I thought that the stories lacked any real interest or originality. They are not very badly written in and of themselves, but I expected something more of these stories.

R.L. says

I thought I'd never finish reading this book. For some reason, it just seemed to drag for me. Maybe it's because the whole idea of finding a way to get Sherlock Holmes to the U.S. might have been fun for one or two stories, but after 8 or 10, the novelty wore off. The stories, taken individually, aren't bad. Almost all of the authors did a good job of evoking the Holmes/Watson ambiance. But:

Dave Hay says

Would have given up on this, were it not audio. Do enjoy the Sherlock Holmes stories, but only find the ACD credible. These new stories are only for those who have read, re-read and re-read the originals. Modern writing has more of a sting in the tail, these fail

Riju Ganguly says

Enough to send you raving back to the canon to savour the exquisite taste of sanity. Good for one (and singularly singular) read only. Therefore, my humble recommendation would be to get it from nearby library.

Mandaray says

Overall I felt this was a mediocre effort. Very few of the short stories within managed to capture what I believe is the essence of a Holmes story, and on top of that they also didn't do a very good job of communicating the feeling of an 1800's America. Far too many hook in to the somewhat unfinished events of *A Study in Scarlet*, borrowing the name of Jefferson Hope without acknowledging the genuine terror and disgust at Mormon practices of the time, or of the deeply personal trials those characters went through. Worse yet, most of the authors seem to be using the setting as an excuse to cameo their favorite historical figures; Theodore Roosevelt and Wyatt Earp in particular are frequently used. I love a good cameo as much as the next person but it felt like such shallow fanservice, again failing to capture what was truly compelling about these figures. The authors never seemed to quite get past "wow what if Sherlock Holmes met Doc Holliday!?!?!?" as if somehow that on its own is enough to propel a story.

Some stories didn't even involve Holmes, which I found deeply puzzling. Yet others attempt to turn him into either an unfeeling robot or bizarre Casanova figure. (None of the stories explored anything even remotely revolutionary about his relationships, sexuality, or general world view. Imo, either you leave it out entirely or you open your work to the full spectrum. Having Holmes sleep with a beautiful white woman challenges absolutely no one.) Some clearly focus on trying to recreate the amazement of "How did you deduce that!?" which, while understandable, comes across as rather flat and as though the author is trying too hard. For me the awe of Holmes' methods never came from *how* he managed it, but in how he lived his life and structured his actions in order *to* manage it. Also I could tell some of the stories were written specifically to confuse the reader, which once again defeats the purpose.

There were a few in here I enjoyed, most notably by Paula Cohen and Lyndsay Faye. And of course everyone's feelings and impressions of Holmes are different, so perhaps you will find more to enjoy in this book than I did. Overall though I would say this collection is a pass, or something you skim and pick through with a vengeance.

Heather says

This book started out strong with a Lindsay Faye story, and was great until the last six or so chapters, when the stories went downhill. The last one was so far out of character that even I- who embraces Mary Russell and Johnlock and all the other "non canon" pastiches- couldn't stomach it.

I listened to this on Audible and it was incredibly distracting when each author's biography was read before each story.

Eric says

In one word: Underwhelming.

Many of these stories were too intricately interwoven with Holmes' canon (most notably *A Study in Scarlet*

and The Valley of Fear) for the casual reader to enjoy, but at the same time, the mysteries in these short stories were so elementary -- if existent at all -- that the serious Holmes fan could not have any appreciation for them.

Many of the stories seemed more preoccupied with guest appearances by famous historical Americans, such as Doc Holliday, Davy Crockett, Teddy Roosevelt, Harry Houdini, Albert Spalding and Pop Warner, than in telling a compelling detective yarn -- and the Houdini tale, 'The Seven Walnuts', did not even feature an appearance by Sherlock Holmes.

There were a few stories I enjoyed in spite of themselves, as none held a candle to the actual detective's stories. 'Excerpts from an Unpublished Memoir Found In the Basement of the Home for Retired Actors' was humorous and unique, despite having a middling mystery; 'The Adventure of the Boston Dromio' was a good revenge tale, despite Holmes acting out of character by employing burglary and blackmail instead of detection; and 'The Song at Twilight' was well written, despite its absurdity.

What I found most baffling was why the essay 'Moriarty, Moran, and More: Anti-Hibernian Sentiment in the Canon' was included at the end of this collection. As someone that has read Holmes' entire canon, I don't see the anti-Irish angle the essay accused of Arthur Conan Doyle, but more importantly, shoehorning this political piece into a book about Sherlock Holmes in America made no sense. If an essay was to be inserted at the end of this edition -- and none were needed -- surely an essay on Doyle's portrayal of Mormons in his first novel would be more appropriate, as they have a correlation with the collection's common thread, being an American religion.

Matt says

I was disappointed in this collection. The various authors have Holmes travel to Texas, Utah, New York, the Northeast, and other parts of the USA. While some are follow ups to typical canon stories like Study in Scarlet and Valley of Fear, several others are more examples of forcing Holmes to meet famous Americans like Wyatt Earp, Doc Holiday, Amos Alonzo Stagg, and Harry Houdini. There are some decent stories placing Holmes in Chicago, but this was not nearly as good as I had hoped

Monica Willyard says

I gave this book another chance, so I'm editing my review. I enjoyed it thoroughly this time through and think the reason I couldn't get into it before was that things in my life weren't going very well at the time. This time, I really enjoyed the stories, the humor, and seeing how Sherlock homes viewed America. It's definitely worth reading. I'm leaving my first review here so you can see where I started from. It is no longer accurate.

I had trouble getting into parts of this book. It just didn't feel right, though the writing is technically good.
