

## ADVENTURE &amp; TRAVEL

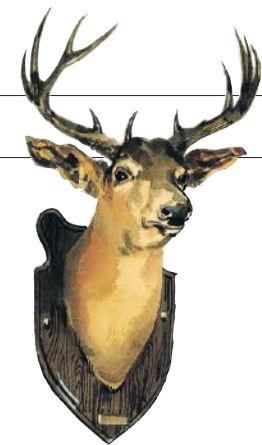
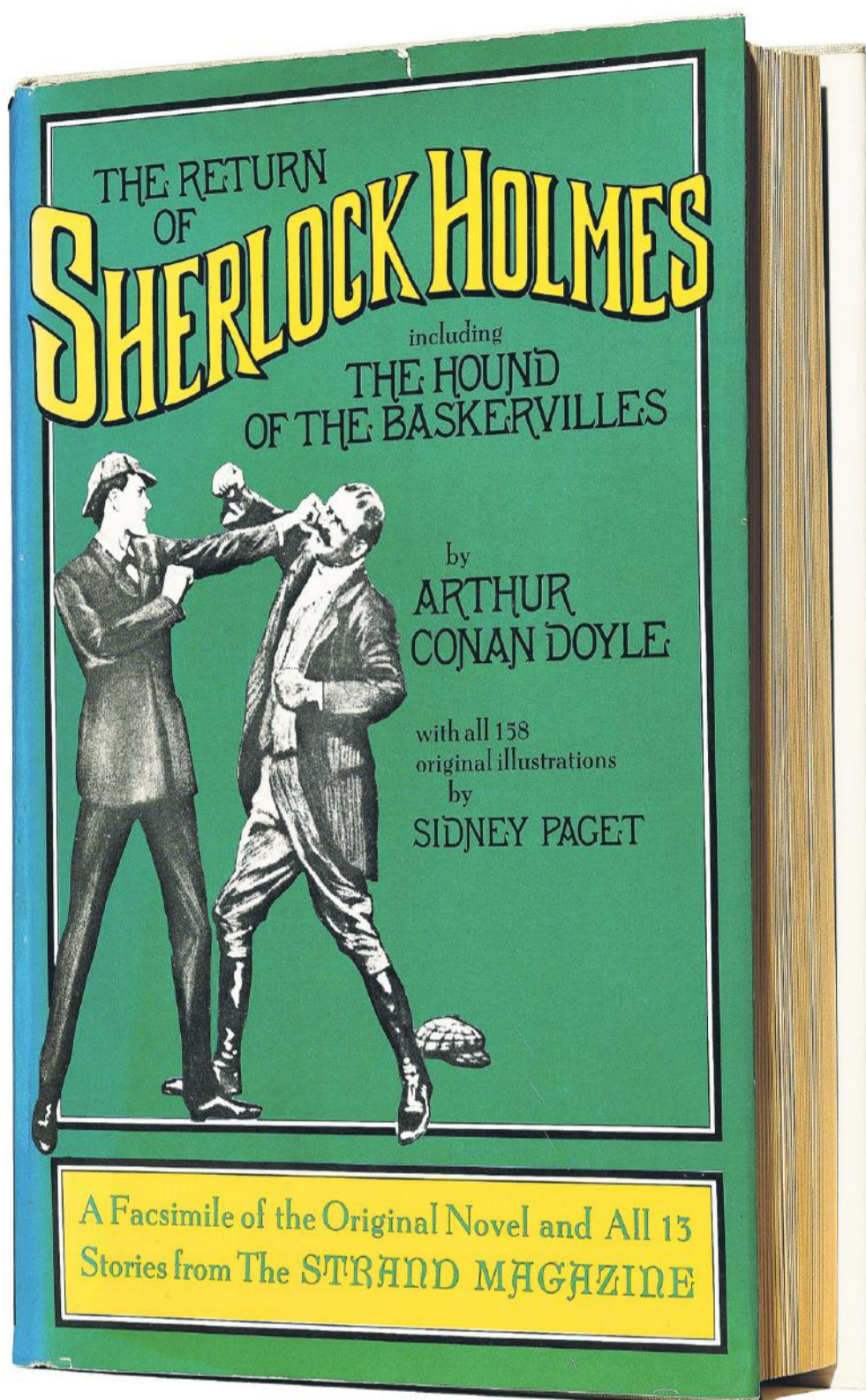
By ELIZA MCGRAW

**A**S YOU LEARN in Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Hound of the Baskervilles," howls carry a long way on the moor. The 1902 novel relates the legend of a bloodthirsty supernatural dog, and the Baskerville family it haunts. The young heir, Sir Henry—who had just arrived from Canada—calls upon Sherlock Holmes—"the specialist in crime"—and his able friend Dr. John Watson to confront the mysterious threat.

Are there any troubleshooters more tireless in the mystery canon? Both in Conan Doyle's original stories and the many interpretations that have followed in print and on screen, watching Holmes decipher impossibly cryptic riddles remains persistently entertaining. Recently the Holmes mythology has re-emerged, remixed in the BBC's Sherlock series and the Netflix movie "Enola Holmes," based on young adult books by Nancy Springer. Yet it's "The Hound of the Baskervilles," the third Sherlock Holmes novel, that's proved the most enduring iteration. "I honestly believe that Conan Doyle would still be remembered today even if he'd written nothing else," said Daniel Stashower, author of the Conan Doyle biography "Teller of Tales." Holmes's creator himself initially described the book as "a real creeper," added Mr. Stashower.

Set in 1889, the book opens at the breakfast table of Holmes's Baker Street residence in London. A country doctor from rural Devon arrives at the door with a "most serious and extraordinary problem." Is baronet Sir Henry Baskerville bound to inherit the curse as well as the family manor house? Must murderers be human? The "legend of the demon dog" intrigues the scrupulously rational Holmes.

After scooting around Victorian London—Bond Street picture galleries, a hotel sitting room—with Holmes and Watson, the reader spends much of the book chasing clues around the "ill-omened" moor.



## INTERIOR DESIGN

**Shadow and gloom**  
Baskerville Hall looms, history-freighted and exquisite. Watson takes it in: "Then we gazed round us at the high, thin window of old stained glass, the oak paneling, the stags' heads [shown], the coats-of-arms upon the walls, all dim and somber in the subdued light of the central lamp." Watson describes the Hall's dining room as a "place of shadow and gloom," with black beams, a ceiling darkened by smoke, and ancestors' portraits. Change, though, is on the way. There's a modern billiard-room, and bedrooms with "bright paper" in the bedroom and plenty of candles. Sir Henry hires furnishers, decorators and an architect, making plans for a new era at Baskerville Hall.



## TECHNOLOGY

**A bright future**  
Holmes and Dr. Watson meet Sir Henry Baskerville—who had spent much of his life in Canada and the U.S.—in the late 1880s. At Baskerville Hall and the nearby villages, where the postmasters are also the grocers, gadgetry is largely constrained to telegrams, a Remington typewriter and an "excellent telescope" a neighbor uses to scan the moors. Baskerville vows to modernize the fusty old ancestral estate, telling Watson he won't recognize the hall once he's placed "a thousand-candle-power Swan and Edison right here in front of the hall door." Thomas Edison debuted his electric lamp (shown) a decade earlier, a year after the British inventor Sir Joseph Wilson Swan demonstrated his. (In 1883, the two men merged their companies to avoid legal wrangling over lightbulb patents.)



## LOCALES

**Melancholy moors, snug firesides**

The wild, spooky quality of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" has a lot to do with Dartmoor (shown), a prehistoric expanse of granite rocks and peat bogs. Conan Doyle explored the moor with journalist Bertram Fletcher Robinson. The idea for Hound came from a conversation with Robinson, who, Mr. Stashower said, "had a strong interest in the folklore of his native Devon." Watson, who travels to Baskerville Hall first, describes the landscape to Holmes almost obsessively: "Behind the peaceful and sunlit countryside there rose, ever dark against the evening sky, the long, gloomy curve of the moor, broken by the jagged and sinister hills." Doom waits in the moor's Grimpen Mire, where a horrified Watson sees a wild pony sucked down into the muck. Tension mounts until the reader, shuddering along with Watson, can't help but wonder what's happening back at snug old Baker Street.

## TRANSPORTING READS

## A Haunted Holmes

This 'real creeper' of a novel, according to its author, pits the great detective against a demon dog. Even spookier is the setting: A desolate moor in Victorian England littered with clues.

## FASHION

**Dressed for rumination**

Sir Henry Baskerville's "ruddy-tinted tweed suit" comes to play a crucial role in the novel's plot. So do his three pairs of boots—one new and brown, one old and black, and one patent leather—some of which enigmatically seem prone to wander.

At least one character blends into his surroundings. The naturalist Mr. Stapleton, who chases insects on the moor, wears a suit and

straw hat along with his specimen-box and butterfly net. "His grey clothes and his jerky, zigzag, irregular progress made him not unlike some huge moth himself," observes Watson.

At home, Holmes likes his dressing-gown (shown), whether he is greeting visitors or considering cases, immersed in the solitude he prefers for rumination. No matter what he's wearing—and when not in disguise—Holmes tends to be immaculate, with, as Watson puts it, "that cat-like love of personal cleanliness."



## EATING AND DRINKING

**Coffee and shag**

Characters do sit down to meals in "The Hound of the Baskervilles," but they seem to subsist more on what they drink than whatever is on their plates. That said, at one point, Watson finds a clue in the following assemblage of food: a loaf of bread, a tinned tongue and two tins of preserved peaches. Wine and coffee are served and enjoyed at Sir Henry's Baskerville Hall, and Scotland Yard's ever-ready Inspector Lestrade carries a



brandy-flask (shown) along with his firearm.

Often, along with their drinks (alcoholic and not), characters smoke, from Holmes and Watson to Dr. Mortimer with his hand-rolled cigarettes. Even the intriguing cigar ash of a possible murder victim is noted. One morning, as Holmes works his way through two pots of coffee in a closed room, he puffs on his black clay pipe so devotedly—consuming what he allows is "an incredible amount of tobacco"—that Watson thinks "a fire had broken out."

## POP THE QUESTION

## What Are Your Favorite Detective Stories?

A screenwriter, private investigator and mystery novelist on the most suspenseful tv shows, films and books



**Hans Rosenfeldt**  
Television screenwriter, most recently of 'Marcella,' and author of 'When Crying Wolf' (Hanover Square Press, 2021)

"Shawn Ryan's TV show 'The Shield' had one of the best anti-heroes ever created in Michael Chiklis' Vic Mackey and—this is hard to achieve—a satisfying ending. Ed McBain's 87th Precinct novels are a big reason why I am doing what I'm doing. Without Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö's Martin Beck series, no Mankell, no Nordic noir. I also loved 'Wire in the Blood': When it aired, it was some of the darkest stuff shown on television. The film 'L.A. Confidential' is a masterpiece. Very atmospheric, and then there's *that* twist."



**Erika Krouse**  
Author of 'Contenders,' 'Come Up and See Me Sometime,' and 'Tell Me Everything: Memoir of a Private Eye' (Flatiron, 2022)

"My introduction to crime fiction was the hardboiled-era novels: Raymond Chandler ('The Long Goodbye' and 'Farewell, My Lovely') and Dashiell Hammett ('The Maltese Falcon'). I never carried a gun or slapped anyone around in my own work as a P.I., but it's so fun to imagine a time when a private detective could be so relentless, damaged and damaging in the pursuit of truth. For films, 'Chinatown' sets the standard, and I love when non-cops become de facto detectives, as in 'All the President's Men.'"



**Megan Miranda**  
Author, most recently of 'The Girl From Widow Hills' and 'The Last House Guest' (Simon & Schuster)

"Nothing hooks me more than a detective returning home to face their past, where old and new mysteries collide. Some favorite novels are 'The Dry' by Jane Harper, where we first meet federal agent Aaron Falk, and 'In the Woods' by Tana French, the first in the excellent Dublin Murder Squad series, both of which feature unsolved mysteries that the main characters were involved with in their youth. I also really enjoy Harlan Coben's Myron Bolitar series, for its blend of suspense and wit." —Edited from interviews by Martha Cheng