

Full Circle: Sherlock Holmes's Greatest Challenge Ever

Maurice Breslow

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With knowing nods to classic Sherlock Holmes stories, Full Circle is a fun, fascinating Victorian-era novella.

Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, and Irene Adler fight for their survival as fictional creations born from the mind of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in Maurice Breslow's entertaining novella *Full Circle*.

Facts from Doyle's life form the foundation of the story, which begins as he is in the midst of writing the tale of Sherlock Holmes's demise at Reichenbach Falls. Doyle is ready to abandon his time-consuming, attention-demanding creative pursuits in order to nurse his wife back to health. During a séance in their home, he and his wife attempt to contact his deceased father. Instead, Doyle sees a disturbing sight: Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson have appeared to him as ghosts. Sometimes accompanied by Irene Adler, they continue to appear to Doyle when his imagination allows it.

The trio, whom Doyle thought of as his fictional creations, have determined that to continue "living," they must convince their writer to deliver new tales about them. With the reluctant compliance of Dr. Moriarty, another of Doyle's characters, they use deduction, disguises, and single-minded determination to change their creator's mind about ending their tales.

The novella is tense, dramatic, and confined to one location, resulting in the feel of a play, despite its prose format. The text maintains the style of Doyle's original stories, too, with its occasional, subtle humor. Holmes and his companions are fresh and exciting in their new roles as ghosts and existential questioners. There are some self-referential nods too: in discussing Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's poems, Holmes says, "Literature has never been one of my strong points," to which Irene Adler replies, "You're joking, Mr. Holmes. Literature is your very being."

Still, the book stays true to the fundamental natures of their characterizations: Holmes is logical; Watson is his dependable partner and chronicler; Irene Adler is mysterious and capable; and Moriarty, in just a few pages, establishes himself as Holmes's devious counterpart. They are satisfying to engage as they ponder deep questions about life and nothingness. Indeed, with their long and rich history as characters, the prospect of literary nonexistence comes to seem like one of the few scenarios that could strike Holmes's famed intellect with a problem that isn't too elementary.

This story touches on interesting questions about authors' responsibilities toward their characters and the dependence of those characters on their creators. With its bold, creative take on the legendary detective, *Full Circle* is a fun, fascinating Victorian-era mystery novella.

PETER DABBENE (July 27, 2022)

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