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# The NEW ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES GIFT SET VOLUME 6



## Synopsis

Welcome to the golden age of radio and the best in classic mystery... From 1939 to 1946 Americans gathered around their radio to listen to "The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes"-- featuring Basil Rathbone as the high strung crime-solver and Nigel Bruce as his phlegmatic assistant. Witty, fast-paced, and always surprising, these great radio plays, written by the prolific writing team of Anthony Boucher and Denis Green, are as fresh today as they were then, and feature perfect sound along with nostalgic war-time announcements, original narrations and radio commercials. This special collector's edition includes: Tape One: The Great Gandolfo and The Adventure of the Original Hamlet Tape Two: Murder By Moonlight and The Singular Affair of the Coptic Compass Tape Three: The Gunpowder Plot and The Babbling Butler Tape Four: The Accidental Murderess and The Adventure Of The Blarney Stone

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Tampa Tribune Great fun. -- Review

SX to supply film & matchprint. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If you are a fan of the classic Sherlock Holmes film series starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, we heartily recommend this wonderful collection of vintage radio plays from the same World War II era as the films. Lovingly restored, this series of relatively obscure adventures of Sherlock Holmes

are brought to vibrant life by Rathbone and Bruce who give sterling performances that seem second nature to them. Listening to this CD is like stepping back in time -- you can practically imagine that you are living in the 1940's sitting by a cozy fireplace one cold evening with the radio on enjoying the great detective's latest adventure for the first time. An added bonus is included: vintage radio commercials evidently included on the original tapes. Also, if you like this product, keep an eye out for the excellent hardcover book called "The Lost Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," by Ken Greenwald, which adapts Anthony Boucher's same radio scripts from this CD into a short story format complete with illustrations based on Rathbone and Bruce. A welcome treat for fans of Sherlock Holmes and for all those who enjoy classic radio programs or may wish to experience one for the first time (as we did).

I can only add my enthusiastic approval to that of the previous reviewers -- here is a happier world of mystery, mood, and the magic of radio, where two fine actors bring the beloved Holmes & Watson to glorious life. The period commercials are a delightful bonus, as is the ever-present organ music. The stories themselves are superb examples of pastiche, written with a deep knowledge & understanding of the characters. But in the end, it's those wonderful actors, Basil Rathbone & Nigel Bruce, who bring the listener back time & time again. Was there ever a Holmes as precise & eloquently spoken as Rathbone's? And while Watson was actually a stronger figure in the Doyle originals, who can resist the warm, avuncular version of Nigel Bruce, all "Harrumph!" with a jolly twinkle in his befuddled eye? So sit back, relax with your glass of Petri wine, and let these long-ago voices return you to a golden age. You'll want to get every collection in this series -- most highly recommended!

The stories are very good, and paint a suprisingly vivid picture. Nigel Bruce is a standout as always. I found that sitting quietly in a room listening to the "radio" was a bit dull, and was obviously replaced with television for good reason. However, while commuting, a long car trip, or on a flight, this radio series is an excellent way to enjoy the Adventures of Sherlock Holmes. The old time commercials are a great touch.

Unedited Radio Broadcasts from the late 30's and 40's with Rathbone and Bruce at their best. Originally released on Cassette many years ago but now for the first time on CD. Highly recommended.

By 1945 the "Sherlock Holmes" radio series starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce relied mostly on original stories written by Anthony Boucher and Denis Green, interspersed with a few Conan Doyle adaptations. The episodes on this first set of CDs are entirely original stories. As was inevitable when a writing team was committed to creating a new Holmes adventure every week, some of the stories are disappointing, but a few rank alongside the better prose pastiches that have been written over the years. "The Unfortunate Tobacconist" is reminiscent of such Canonical tales as "The Engineer's Thumb" in that it presents an effective and memorable central situation, the resolution of which tails off at the end into offstage confusion in which Holmes and Watson are not directly involved. Nigel Bruce's Watson is even dumber than usual here, never having heard the expression "kick the bucket" and having to be told by Holmes to hide behind a counter rather than under it! "The Paradol Chamber" is based on one of Watson's references in the original stories to unrecorded cases Holmes investigated. I had always imagined the Paradol Chamber to be a room in which someone was killed or in which Holmes and Watson were trapped and in danger of suffocating. The radio version fulfills both of these expectations, but the story constructed around them is extremely unsatisfactory in every other way. Mary Morstan Watson is depicted at the outset as far less than the intelligent woman she was in Conan Doyle's "Sign of Four", before suddenly becoming a deductive genius and saving Holmes and Watson at the end. "The Viennese Strangler" is a highly enjoyable, campy story, especially memorable for the over-the-top character of an Italian opera diva. Unfortunately, it shares with "The Notorious Canary Trainer", the other story on the same CD, the device of Holmes frightening a confession out of the criminal in an unbelievable way. Conan Doyle himself actually left unwritten a Holmes story he had outlined -- "The Adventure of the Tall Man" -- apparently because it would have forced him to use such a denouement. "The April Fool's Day Adventure" is unusual in being an extremely early case for Holmes and Watson, occurring less than a month after "A Study in Scarlet". The newness of Holmes and Watson's friendship is demonstrated by Holmes seriously considering Watson a potential suspect at one point. The climactic twist is lots of fun, although I saw it coming ten miles away. Rathbone seems to be making an effort to sound younger, but Bruce sounds as old and stuffy as ever; thus one must think of the story as being filtered through the elderly Watson's remembrance. "The Strange Adventure of the Uneasy Easy Chair" suffers from its plot being somewhat given away by its title, which is not actually mentioned on the radio broadcast, presumably for that reason. "The Strange Case of the Demon Barber" involves an actor playing the role of Sweeney Todd. Holmes himself is more likeable than usual in this episode. "The Mystery of the Headless Monk" is an unusually dark story, particularly in its conclusion, which features some of the most chillingly effective acting in the

series. One suspects that the reference to William Hope Hodgson's supernatural investigator character Carnacki sailed over the heads of most 1940's American listeners, let alone the modern-day audience. "The Amateur Mendicant Society" -- another unrecorded adventure mentioned in the Canon -- is profoundly disappointing. Its first half is one of the best openings to a Holmes pastiche I have ever encountered, but the second half is a major letdown in which the story turns out to be about something entirely different from what it seemed. "The Case of the Vanishing Elephant" takes place in India. The episode implies that Holmes -- wildly uncharacteristically -- has made the long, dangerous journey from England \*\*without knowing what his client wants him to investigate\*\*. "The Case of the Limping Ghost", like "The Headless Monk", is a tale of debunking the supernatural. Amusingly, an American character seems to be voiced by Harry Bartel, the series' announcer, who is usually heard delivering the commercials for Petri wine! "The Girl with the Gazelle" is a Professor Moriarty story in which, as in Conan Doyle's "The Valley of Fear", Moriarty himself remains off-stage. It is a highly satisfying story of an ingenious scheme inspired by the Professor's love of the French artist Greuze. Overall, this is a fun collection for anyone willing to countenance further adventures of the Great Detective beyond the sixty tales of Conan Doyle, and whose teeth are not instantly set on edge by Bruce's somewhat inauthentic (but loveable) characterization of Dr. Watson.

Nigel Bruce's Watson is a loveable bumbler--quite a contrast to Conan Doyle's capable but unimaginative Watson. The stories tend to be somewhat contrived and suffer in comparison to the BBC productions of original Doyle stories in which Clive Morrison starred as Holmes. The organ music gets monotonous, and if I weren't already a teetotaler, the wine commercials would make me take the temperance pledge. Despite all that, the productions are wonderfully entertaining. Basil Rathbone's Holmes exceeds Clive Morrison's overacted Holmes as the day exceeds the night. The chemistry between Bruce and Rathbone is perfect, and the simple stories move swiftly to their satisfying (if somewhat obvious) conclusions. Although Holmes purists tend to hate Nigel Bruce's Watson, I found him to be irresistably likeable. I'd want Doyle's Watson guarding my back in a tight spot, but I'd rather sit by the fireplace and swap stories with Bruce's Watson. I particularly liked the host's introductory visits with Watson in which Watson sets the stage for the mysteries.

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