

**Graham Moore**

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Updated: Dec. 10, 2015

Born: October 08, 1981 in Chicago, Illinois, United States

Nationality: American

Occupation: Novelist

Updated: Dec. 10, 2015

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## PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Born October 8, 1981, in Chicago, IL; son of Susan Sher (an attorney). **Education:** Columbia University, B.A., 2003. **Addresses:** Home: Los Angeles, CA. **E-mail:** graham@thesherlockian.com.

## AWARDS:

Academy Award, best adapted screenplay, for *The Imitation Game*, 2015.

## WORKS:

**WRITINGS:**

*The Sherlockian* (novel), Twelve (New York, NY), 2010, also published as *The Holmes Affair*, Century (London, England), 2011.

*The Imitation Game* (screenplay adaptation of *Alan Turing: The Enigma* by Andrew Hodges), Black Bear Pictures, 2014.

Has written for the television show *10 Things I Hate about You*.

**Sidelights**

Graham Moore was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1980 and graduated from Columbia University with a degree in religious history. Moore has been a fan of the mystery genre since his childhood, after reading his first Agatha Christie novel in the second grade.

Moore published his first novel, *The Sherlockian*, in 2010, which was released in England the following year as *The Holmes Affair*. The novel traces two mysteries across time. New Baker Street Irregulars inductee Harold White investigates the murder of a prominent Sherlock Holmes expert as he prepared to release an unknown diary by Conan Doyle. Separately, Moore pairs Conan Doyle with *Dracula*

author Bram Stoker to solve a murder surrounding the events of his decision to kill off Holmes in one of his novels.

In an article in *Time Out Chicago*, Moore explained to Jonathan Messinger that he had to deal with the moral issues of putting actual people in a fictitious setting. Moore recalled: "You're making people say things they didn't say. It's a strange blend of things that are hyperaccurate, things that are sort of true, and things that are very much of my own invention. But with fiction, you get to do that, you get to bend reality to make it stronger, or get closer to the truth." Moore additionally discussed the reasons why he believes that the mystery genre is attractive to so many people in an interview for National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition*. Moore found that "the enduring appeal of mystery stories for all of us is that the world is a pretty confusing place. There's a lot of really unanswered things, and perhaps the scariest notion would be that there might not always be answers out there for us."

Writing in the *Huffington Post*, Amy Hertz described Moore as "a hot young author who has wanted nothing more than to write a mystery his entire life," pointing out that "early praise indicates it's likely to cross over to general readers of smart fiction." In a review on the *S. Krishna's Books* website, Swapna Krishna stated: "I enjoyed *The Sherlockian* immensely. I couldn't put it down because it was so compelling and the mystery was so well done. Whether you are a huge fan of Sherlock Holmes, or ... don't know much about him, ... you must pick up this book." A contributor to the *Novel Chatter* website took note of "the plotting and twists that Moore brings to the story," adding that he "writes an enjoyable book, encompassing the telling of two gripping tales within the single book. *The Sherlockian* is the kind of book that I read quickly, rapidly turning the page in anticipation." In a review on the *Pub Writes* website, Caitie Flum mentioned that "this book was so much fun to read. I really look forward to reading more by Graham Moore, since this book was such a joy to read."

*Luxury Reading* website critic Nina Longfield opined that "Moore's Doyle is so entertaining that it is almost disappointing when returning to the contemporary mystery. However the mysteries through both narrations continue to draw one in through to the end of the novel." In a review on the *A.V. Club* website, Christian Williams remarked that the novel "has its dweeby charms. The detective play-acting is ridiculous, then infectious, and there's the timeless appeal of the Sherlock stories themselves, which are mined for clues, epigrams, and that still-irresistible promise of a logical coherence that the world doesn't actually possess." In an article in the *Dallas Morning News*, Bryan Woolley observed that "Moore uses alternating chapters to tell his two stories--a method that could become clumsy, but doesn't. Then the tales merge in a grand finale that, looking back, seems inevitable." Writing in *Library Journal*, Laurel Bliss agreed that the continuous "switching of narrators can be jarring, but Moore does an excellent job of making his characters and settings feel real." *Booklist* contributor Don Crinklaw concluded that "mystery fans should love the mix of historical fiction and contemporary puzzle solving. And Sherlockians? Try keeping them away."

*The Imitation Game* is a 2014 biopic about the life of Alan Turing, the British prodigal mathematician, pioneering computer scientist, and World War II codebreaker. The story is based loosely on the biography *Alan Turing: The Enigma* by Andrew Hodges. Much of the film focuses, often through flashbacks, on Turing's recruitment into the Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park in England, where a key goal was to break the German "Enigma" code--and where Turing frequently clashed with his bosses and colleagues, all the while facing potentially dire consequences because he was gay. The film then explores Turing's postwar fate as he was convicted for indecency and given a choice between chemical castration and prison; he opted for the former.

It was Moore who adapted the material to produce the screenplay for the film--successfully, for in 2015 he won the Academy Award for best adapted screenplay. Critics and reviewers, as might be expected, saw *The Imitation Game* as a collective endeavor, one that rises and falls based on the skill and efforts not just of the screenwriter but also of the director, actors, and others involved in the production. Nevertheless, Scott Foundas, in a review for *Variety*, had this to say about Moore's efforts: "Moore seems to have made a close study of Aaron Sorkin's script for *The Social Network*, which *The Imitation Game* resembles in its flashback structure, many scenes of geeky young men huddled over

complex algorithms, and its central conception of Turing as an Aspergian outcast who makes up in haughty, condescending attitude what he lacks in basic social graces." Foundas continued: "That's not a bad model to work from, though Moore has also picked up a few less desirable habits from those screenwriting seminars that encourage writers to do things like having multiple characters articulate the theme of the movie in a nifty, self-empowering mantra." Later, Foundas offered this qualified praise: "[Director Morten] Tyldum and Moore may not be the most inspired of craftsmen, but they know how to keep things moving at a brisk pace, and they manage to cram an impressive amount of information and detail into less than two hours of screen time." The movie, wrote Foundas, "is especially good at maintaining a constant, queasy sense of the war, ... the British body count rising ever higher the longer it takes our intrepid pencil pushers to solve their cryptographic puzzle."

Christian Caryl, writing for the *New York Review of Books*, was particularly severe on the story as presented. After pointing out various historical inaccuracies, Caryl comments that the film "represents a bizarre departure from the historical record" and that it "does its best to ladle in extra doses of intrigue where none existed." Regarding the film's treatment of Turing's homosexuality after the war, which depicted a kind of emotional and psychological collapse, Caryl noted: "As near as I can tell, there is no basis for any of this in the historical record; it's monstrous hogwash, a conceit entirely cooked up by Moore." Caryl went on to excoriate the "bad faith underlying the whole enterprise, which is desperate to put Turing in the role of a gay liberation totem." In a review for the *New Yorker*, Anthony Lane agreed. Again, after citing what he believes to have been distortions of the historical record surrounding Turing's efforts at Bletchley Park and surrounding his homosexuality, Lane concluded: "I am not sure what is more galling, the willful misreading of British mores or the falsification of science."

FURTHER READINGS:

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