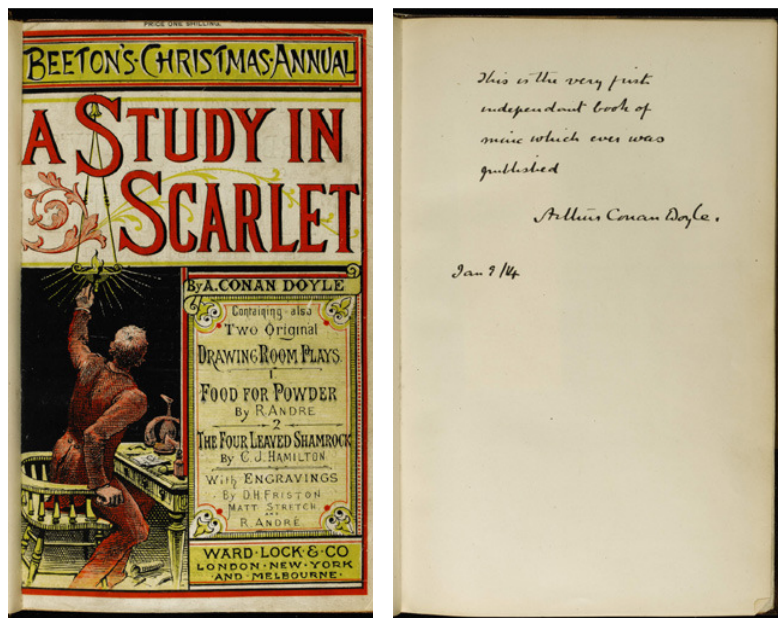


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**-- Sherlock Holmes' First Ever Appearance --**  
**Sotheby's To Sell Extremely Rare Inscribed Copy**  
**of *A Study in Scarlet*:**  
**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Debut Novel**  
**- One of Only Two Copies Inscribed by the Author**



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* - in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, 1887, est. £250,000-400,000

*"...There's the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it..."*  
(Sherlock Holmes, in *A Study in Scarlet*)

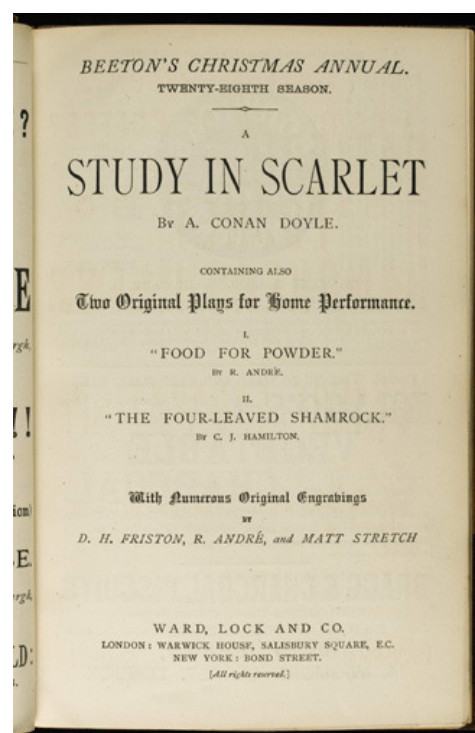
**London 19 May 2010 ---** In July, Sotheby's London will auction one of the rarest books of modern times: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, which debuts the most celebrated literary character of all time – Sherlock Holmes. Published in 1887 and written in under three weeks, this work to be offered is one of only two inscribed copies known to be in existence. Undoubtedly the most important book Conan Doyle ever wrote, *A Study in Scarlet* gave birth to Sherlock Holmes, explained how he and Dr Watson came to be together and set in motion one of the most highly successful characters - and

indeed the first major *serial* character - in English literature, a forerunner of everyone from Hercule Poirot to James Bond. The novel will be offered on 15<sup>th</sup> July as part of an English Literature, History, Children's Books and Illustrations sale, and is estimated to fetch £250,000-400,000.

Conan Doyle began writing *A Study in Scarlet* on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1886: despite being an instant success on publication, the work was initially rejected by a succession of publishers, and it wasn't until November 1887 that it appeared in print, in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* – a miscellany published annually since 1860. The issue sold out in fourteen days and was later republished - although Conan Doyle never received a penny more for the work, having given up all the rights to his publisher for the sum of £25.

Speaking of the sale, Peter Selley, Senior Specialist in Sotheby's Books and Manuscripts Department, said: *"Holmes is a character so compelling and complex that many were to believe that he was a real person – even as late as the 1950s the English Post Office was still receiving many letters personally addressed to the detective – no such fictional character had ever become so widely known in such a short space of time. With only 31 copies recorded in the most recent census, the Beeton's A Study in Scarlet has always been regarded as extremely rare and valuable: the last copy made over \$150,000 at auction at Sotheby's in New York in 2007. But no signed or inscribed copy has ever been offered for sale at auction since it was published in 1887, and it is highly unlikely that such a copy will ever become available again. The sale represents an opportunity to acquire the finest copy of the most important cornerstone of any collection of detective literature in the world".*

*A Study in Scarlet* features Holmes' classic first remark - uttered on meeting Dr Watson: *"How are you? You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive..."*, as well as Watson's insightful description Holmes, written on their first meeting: *"His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have alluded; and his thin,*



*hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch...".*

The author's inscription reads: '*This is the first independent book of mine which ever was published, Arthur Conan Doyle*' (illustrated on first page). It is fitting that this copy of *A Study in Scarlet* was inscribed - on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1914 - at just the time Conan Doyle was composing his fourth and final long Sherlock Holmes adventure *The Valley of Fear*, twenty-eight years later.

Over the next forty years after the publication of *A Study in Scarlet* a total of sixty Holmes stories were to appear, all eagerly awaited by worldwide readership - in fact, Holmes grew so popular, that Conan Doyle feared he would never be known for anything else.

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE VIA EMAIL

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\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium