



Page Turners

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This newsletter will also appear at: <http://www.joanuptonhall.com/pageturner.htm> with authors' photos

The authors' cooperative, Page Turners, welcomes you to this free, monthly newsletter. We encourage you to forward it to others you think would enjoy it, print it to share with friends, and invite them to subscribe by emailing us. You may unsubscribe at any time.

Contact: PageTurnerHome@aol.com Editor: Joan Upton Hall

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Need a speaker? Check websites below for a writer near you.

Meet our Staff: Authors whose pages you must turn!

M.D. Benoit <http://www.mdbenoit.com> Science Fiction Mystery, Alternate Reality
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 Cheryl Swanson <http://www.cherylswanson.net> Contemporary thriller, self-help nonfiction
 George Wilhite (website under construction) Mystery/Detective, Western, Speculative, Noir, Nonfiction

MAIL BAG – READERS WRITE

Have questions you'd like to ask any of these authors? Comments about their books? Their favorite desserts? What pets they have?

Write to Page Turners at the email address shown in the masthead.

Be sure to state which author you are addressing.

Dear friends,

Some of the PT authors have written special Christmas stories for you this month (See section called “**Book Sellin’, Searchin’ & Signin’ Shenanigans**”). Others have specials listed on their websites and blogs. ALL of us wish you a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS !

—The PageTurner Staff

Have a first book or other “first” to announce? Tell us about it. Here's all you need to do:

1. Mention PageTurners newsletter (something specific you like about it would be nice — but isn’t required).
2. Announce the title of your book (or whatever), a short blurb about it, and where it can be purchased.
3. Include a short blurb about you as a writer and your website if you have one.

AUTHOR OF THE MONTH: L.C. Hayden

Lives in: El Paso, Texas

Writing genres: Mystery, Inspirational, Horror, Children

Website: <http://lchayden.freesevers.com>

L. C. Hayden has experienced a vast amount of adventures because of her writing. On the scary side, she had her Miranda Rights read because of a promotion that went wrong. On the positive side, her recent promotional efforts led her to touch all four corners of the U.S. (Florida, Maine, California, Alaska, and Hawaii. Okay, so that’s five.)—all within one year.

Hayden, who does not want to be outdone by her series character, retired Detective Harry Bronson, took up geocaching. Most of the caches Hayden mentions in her *Casey* novel are actual geocaching sites—and just like Bronson, Hayden and her husband own a motor home and travel all over the United States. She promotes the books; Bronson solves the mysteries. For another series she’s writing, her character took up scuba diving—so did Hayden.

Hayden further encounters more adventures during her “working” cruises she does for various cruise lines as Author-in-Residence. This year alone, Princess Cruises sent her and her husband on a Grand Mediterranean Cruise and Celebrity sent them on a Panama Canal cruise.

Hayden hosted Mystery Writers of America’s only live talk show, *Murder Must Air*. She’s busy writing a stand alone and the next Harry Bronson novel. She’s also preparing for the April 2010 release of *When Death Intervenes*.

**Book of the Month: *When Death Intervenes*
by L.C. Hayden**

Five Star plans to release my next Harry Bronson book, *When Death Intervenes*, this coming April. That always releases a wide range of emotions. For one, thrill makes its presence known. I can't wait to hold the baby I created, but along with this comes apprehension.

The ARC's (Advanced Readers Copy) should be hitting the reviewers fairly soon. Will they choose to renew it? If they don't, sales aren't going to be that great. Yet, neither the publisher nor I have control over this. If they do review it, will it be favorable? Oh, please, please let it be favorable and let it be reviewed. Some say it's better to get a bad review rather than a no review, but I don't want to waste a wish: let it be reviewed by most of the Big Four (Kirkus, Publishers Weekly, Booklist, and Library Journal) and as many others as possible and let all reviewers absolutely love it.

Review or no review, the book will come out, and that's when the pressure to sell lots of books begins. As you may know, my previous Harry Bronson book, *Why Casey Had to Die*, met with a lot of success. It was an Agatha Finalist for Best Novel, a Penn, Top 40 Pick, and received the Best of the Best Award from the El Paso Writers League. *Casey* was released as a hardcover, a large print, and a paperback. When the paperback hit the public, it sold out in less than two months. The audio version will soon be released and the Italian rights are pending.

Can *When Death Intervenes* top that? It's going to have to, if I expect Five Star to release my next Harry Bronson novel which is now in the working stages.

All of these thoughts are causing my lip to quiver and my forehead to sweat. My heart beats faster. When this happens, I sit back and think about *When Death Intervenes*. It's a great story, filled with action and tension. Harry and Carol Bronson are, as always, loveable. It promises to give a fast, edge-of-the-seat read. I have all the confidence in the world.

Yes, *When Death Intervenes* will succeed—after all, isn't Bronson always a winner?

GET 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT

(Other Releases & Successes)

December Release!

Sassy Southern - Classy Cajun

by Sylvia Dickey Smith

The term, Sassy Southern Classy Cajun may sound like an oxymoron to the average person. But in a land where folks live to eat rather than eat to live, good food becomes a passion. In southeast Texas, where southerners and Cajuns all sleep under the same threat of hurricanes and where mosquitoes grow as big as dragonflies—almost—gregarious folks welcome any excuse to get together for fellowship, fun and lively music. Food is the common denominator, an important part of any gathering.

One **Sidra Smart** fan, says, "Cooking is home, Momma's kitchen, where everyone gathers, where aromas bring back precious memories of the family sitting around the table talking and waiting for the gumbo to get finished, eating crackers with Tabasco Sauce poured on them and raw oysters out of the jar, the juice dripping down your chin. You can't wait for that first taste of the simmering pot of goodness, Christmas tree lights glittering on the tree in the corner of the living room. Good food brings families home to love."

Another says, "Cooking brings home to wherever you are. We moved five times when I was a kid. The only thing that stayed the same was my mother's special dishes. Passion and comfort. Reassurance and recognition. I remember her stuffed peppers on a winter day—how warm it made me feel, inside and out."

No wonder **Sidra Smart** has fallen in love with the area, the people, and the food. She offers a sampling of a few great recipes. And in the end, shares her famous Sassy Pickles recipe. See cover, read more at: www.sylviadickeysmyth.com
Cook book available at bookstores and online bookstores.

December or Early January Release!
The Devil in Merrivale
by Jackie Griffey

Here at the end of November, I'm doing the final edit on *The Devil in Merrivale*, the first of my Merrivale cozy mysteries. **Zumaya Publications** plans a new Merrivale scheduled each year after that. Details will follow next month about my blog tour. Also check: <http://www.jackiegriffey.com>

The Weather May be Cold, But This is Hot

Cheryl Swanson's recently released cancer survival guide: **Busting Loose: Cancer Survivors Tell You What Your Doctors Won't** is drawing high praise from top doctors. **Dr. Christiane Northrup, MD, ob/gyn** and author of the **New York Times** bestsellers: **Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom and The Wisdom of Menopause**, recently endorsed it, saying:

"Busting Loose is loaded with the kind of compassionate truth that can save your life!"

Wrapping up My Year
by Diane Fanning

In its first week of sales, *Mommy's Little Girl* was the #2 bestselling mass market non-fiction book in the country according to **Nielsen Bookscan**. The book was recently released as a book club selection with the **Literary Guild, Mystery Guild, Book-of-the-Month club** and **Doubleday Book Club**.

In December, Severn House will release a Large Print Edition of *The Trophy Exchange*, the first **Lucinda Pierce** mystery.

The third **Lucinda Pierce** mystery, *Mistaken Identity*, is scheduled for release on May 1, 2010.

In this current season, I have been on three episodes of "Deadly Women" on the **Investigation Discovery** channel. If you missed those shows, re-runs air a lot. The three women I discussed were **Carolyn Warnous, Celeste Beard** and **Andrea Yates**.

The producers just contacted me last week to ask me to be a part of their fourth season. They have me slated for four episodes in the next season. I guess I get a little deadlier every year!

On my website, you'll find a sample chapter from all of my books, video clips from my interview with *48 Hours*, book trailers and much more. Stop by whenever you can, www.dianefanning.com

On the Launch Pad for 2010: Two New Books
by David Ciambrone

I have sent a new **Virginia Davies** Book to the publisher a couple weeks ago (*It Started in Texas*) and it will be out late 2010. I also sold a book on handy household hints to a publisher.

Book Sellin', Searchin' & Signin' Shenanigans

(Or: A funny thing happened on the way...)

SPECIAL to Our Readers from Our PT Staff: **CHRISTMAS SHORT SHORT STORIES**

The Tree **by Gloria Oliver**

Miaka sensed immediately that something in her kingdom had changed.

There was a new scent filtering through the house -- one that spoke of nature and outside. It sent a tingle through her furry frame, awakening primal instincts. She scurried to the corner of the hall, curious, watching her larger housemates struggle with this brown thing with green needles and that marvelous scent. They set it into a red bracket in the corner of the big room then cut away the net around it, which allowed the thing to spread out, small brown arms full of green reaching out, beckoning to her.

Boxes were brought in from the garage and set on the floor. These smelled of dust, glass, and metal.

She slinked around them and the tall outside thing, sniffing, cataloging, her small dark eyes bright.

Round, shiny items were taken out of the boxes and hanged off the arms of the tall mysterious thing. The sunlight glittered off their colorful bodies, making her dizzy and filling her with strange excitement.

Her housemates talked and worked, moving her out of the way when she got too close.

Eventually all the activity died down. Those who fed and played with her stood before the towering thing and stared with seeming pleasure.

The boxes were closed up and hidden beneath the couch or taken back to where they came from.

Miaka stared at it, too, and realized that this thing, it was for her. Must be hers. The tantalizing scents wafting from it told her so. She climbed the couch with a blur of speed then stood poised on the back studying what called to her soul. Yes, this was hers to do as she saw fit!

So moving over the top of the couch, she calculated angles and trajectories then she rushed at it, leaping through the air to land in the embracing branches.

"The ferret!"

The thing jingled and jangled as she dove deeper into the interior. Reaching the central core, she went upwards, her blood singing. She became as tall as her housemates. Taller! She was the owner of all she surveyed!

Her lofty perch began to sway.

"Miaka! Miaka, no!"

CRASH.

"Oh my God!"

She rolled as the thing bounced and ran off under a chair amidst the sudden yelling and running around by the others. Peeking out, she saw there was no need to worry. Her housemates were setting up her toy upright again.

Soon she would reign supreme once more.

A Magical Christmas

by Diane Fanning

In November, the lease ran out on the Butcher family's home and the new house they were building was not yet complete. Ann and Leon and their three children moved into a tiny bungalow with Ann's parents. The couple slept on a trundle bed next the cribs for the two smallest children in the spare room. Their oldest, a 5-year-old girl, fell asleep on her grandparents' bed each night and was carried out to the living room sofa when the adults retired for the evening.

On Christmas Eve, as the little girl drifted off to sleep, she was certain she heard the distant sound of sleigh bells that grew closer and closer. Then she heard a thump as the sleigh runners landed on the roof. She squeezed her eyes shut willing herself to sleep.

She didn't awaken when she was carried into the living room but when the house was all quiet, she stirred and looked across the living room at the beautiful Christmas tree and all the lovely packages stacked beneath it. She wanted to jump up and tear into the red and green wrapping paper but it was still dark outside so she knew she had to lay still.

Then a glow building pulsed from inside each package, spreading outward until it enveloped the whole room. On one package after another, the bows and ribbon unfurled, the wrapping paper fell away. The gifts danced out of their boxes and across the floor. The sight that took her breath away was the unwrapping of the one gift she wanted more than anything. A teeny footlocker hinged open, revealing little outfits fluttering on a rack on one side. On the other, a doll with shiny blonde hair and sparkling blue eyes took a step out of the chest and twirled on her tip-toes into the center of the room. The doll curtsied before the little girl and then snapped her fingers.

At the dolls command, all the other gifts, danced with her back into their packages. The paper crinkled into place and the bows tied back together. And the little girl sighed as she drifted back to sleep.

According to family legend, the little girl named the contents of every package before it was opened the next morning. The adults exclaimed at her uncanny imagination. But the little girl knew what happened that Christmas was magic and knew no one could ever explain it away. Because it happened—it really did. I know because I was that little girl and the memory of that enchanted night will keep me young forever.

I Almost Caught Santa

by Joan Upton Hall

The Christmas I almost caught Santa Claus, I was five years old—more than half a century ago. Mama said Santa made his visits in secret because of shyness and a tight schedule. In those days, he didn't have helpers on street corners and in department stores as he does now.

My family always opened presents on Christmas Eve night. Daddy showed me the world globe and told me we happened to be at the first part of Santa's rounds. As soon as it grew dark, we would usually drive around and look at Christmas lights to give Santa the time he needed at our house. But that particular evening, Daddy and my two brothers didn't finish supper until after dark. Then they had to go outside in the snow and take care of our animals. I hoped those chores wouldn't take long so we could go for our drive.

I was still pushing supper around on my plate, too excited to eat. Suddenly, I heard something like hooves on our tin roof.

Mama and my big sister were so busy decorating Christmas cookies, they didn't hear it. But then grown-ups miss most important stuff if you don't call their attention to it.

"Listen!" I jumped down from my chair and dashed toward the living room where the tree and fireplace were.

Mama swooped me up and carried me to the kitchen window. "Let's see what's making that noise."

I knew what the noise was. Looking back on the event, I think my plan to sneak into the living

room would have worked best, but it was fun drawing Mama and my sister into the excitement. I swiped a clear spot on the steamy glass and pressed my nose against the icy surface. Our dog stood wagging his tail and barking toward the roof.

Click, click...scree-eech. Sled runners—it must be!

My sister's eyes rounded when we looked at each other, and it took something really important to get a teenager's attention.

Bump in the living room!

"In there!" I whispered. "Let's go peek!"

"Look." Mama held me tight and pointed at the sky. "I thought I saw something."

Just then one of my brothers stomped in with an armload of firewood. "Whew, sure is cold out there!" His voice boomed out.

"Shh!" I squirmed to get down and stop him, but he kept talking loud. Then, to my horror, he stomped on into the living room. What if he scared Santa off completely?

Even through all the clunking of logs he dumped on the hearth, I heard sounds on the roof again, hooves clicked, sleigh bells jingled, *scree-eech* and a muffled "Ho, ho, ho."

Daddy appeared mysteriously behind me. He didn't seem to hear a thing.

My brother came from the living room. "Guess what," he said. "Looks like Santa came while we weren't noticing."

"Not noticing?" I said. "We heard him on the roof!"

"My gosh!" My other brother came in through the kitchen door just then. "Is that what it was? I thought I saw something out of the corner of my eye."

"What?" I demanded. "What did you see?"

"Well, it was kind of shadowy. Something crossed in front of the moon real fast."

I knew I'd missed Santa all right, but I could feel his presence.

We went ahead and had the tree right then, without driving around to see Christmas lights. We'd seen them before anyway. I don't remember much about the rest of the evening except a beautiful doll half as big as me.

My heart was full with the idea of how close I'd come to meeting that sweet old guy with the white whiskers. I could still smell his pipe smoke and see a snowy footprint on the hearth. But it melted fast when Daddy struck a match to the logs in the fireplace.

My heart warms again every time I think of it.

A Different Kind of Christmas – Hawaii to Holland by Cheryl Swanson

On the left side of the airplane there's a great view of Amsterdam, where I'm spending Christmas with my husband and five-year-old daughter. We've flown there from our tiny island of Kauai to visit my husband's brother for a week. One week in a Big Foreign City seems enough for us, because we come from a funky village whose entire population came over to wish us Merry Christmas before we left.

All four of them.

A lot of things draw people to Amsterdam. There are windmills, tulips, museums full of Van Gogh paintings, and (of course) legalized drugs and prostitution. But never Christmas. Wrangling bulging bags of Christmas presents off the plane, we draw quite a few puzzled stars.

"What you got there?" asks the Dutch stewardess, as we exit. My husband doesn't reply. After flying for eighteen hours, he is covered with child stickers, child-spilled food, and I'm afraid, child poop. His facial expression is wild-eyed and disoriented. In fact, he looks a lot like Jack Nicholson's before he lost it in *The Shining*.

"Stuff from Santa," says my daughter, smiling for the first time in 5573 miles.

"Santa?" repeats the stewardess, with a puzzled frown. "Who's Santa?" What none of us realize is that she's not joking. Never again will we hear Santa Claus mentioned in Holland.

When we planned the holiday, my brother-in-law neglected to mention that there is no Santa Claus in Holland. A man called Odalric fills us in on this as we walk through the brightly lit Amsterdam terminal. It seems that the Dutch equivalent is Saint Nicholas, who is painfully thin and wears a tall hat like the pope. The outfit, Odalric tells us, is a carryover from St. Nick's former career, when he served as the bishop of Turkey.

I try envisioning such a person, but nothing comes. I've never thought of myself as a cultural chauvinist, but Santa is jolly and fat, not painfully thin. And more important, Santa has nothing to do with Turkey. It's too dangerous there, and the people wouldn't appreciate him.

Amsterdam is a pretty city, but it's wallpapered with people and the canals and streets are covered by a pale of acrid winter smoke. Sucking it in after clean air of our Hawaiian home feels like sucking volcanic ash from a nearby eruption. Worse, my five-year-old has heard enough from Odalric to be near tears. He's told her that St. Nicholas arrives by boat sometime in November. After landing in a Dutch harbor, he transfers to a white horse, waving to the huge crowds who gather to meet him.

"All alone?" my daughter asks anxiously. "Doesn't he have elves?"

"Elves?" Odalric repeats this in a high tone, as if the idea of elves is just so silly. "No, he has eight black men."

This is a very hard pill to swallow, and my brother-in-law, who meets us at the train station, rapidly makes it worse. He tells us the black men were once clearly identified as St. Nicholas' personal slaves. It is only due to the political climate that they are now called "good friends."

Even a five-year-old realizes there's a big difference between slavery and friendship, and she doesn't swallow this for one moment. "Having slaves is evil!" she yells. "And they wouldn't become Santa's friends, they would punch him in the stomach!"

My daughter is now very upset, and finding out that the day for gift-giving is already long past (Dutch children apparently receive gifts on December 5) she erupts into floods of tears.

My brother-in-law is normally amiable and a good host, but he is also a childless bachelor with a taste for the finer things, like opera, the symphony and clear soup. He is having a hard time adjusting to a five-year-old, and her crying turns him jittery. To shut her up, he explains that if a child is naughty, Saint Nicholas and his eight black "friends" beat her with what he describes as the "small branch of a tree."

"I can understand that," says my long-suffering husband. Our daughter has paused in her crying long enough to throw up her last three airplane meals on him. Splat. Splat. Splat.

"And if the child was especially naughty, then St. Nicholas put her in a sack and takes her back to Spain," mumbles my brother-in-law.

"Spain? Why not Turkey?" I ask. But I have already realized that Christmas is at best a third-rate institution in the Netherlands. As a child you get to hear this horrible story. As an adult, you get to repeat it. As an added bonus, the government has thrown in legalized drugs and prostitution. So what's not to love about being Dutch?

The bit about the being stuffed in sacks adds plain, old-fashioned fear to my daughter's sense of shock and betrayal. It doesn't help that we've arrived at my brother-in-law's apartment, which is four stories up with no elevator, in a building two hundred years old. It's big enough to comfortably house the four of us—if we were the size of chickens. Desperate for freedom and fresh air, my daughter starts banging off the walls like a greased pig in a rodeo chute. And who can blame her? What kind of a Santa hits people with sticks and then stuffs them in a canvas sack? And then, of course, you've got the whole slavery thing.

By now, my daughter is also pretty much crying non-stop. The only way I can pacify her is to tell her that we'll go shopping the next day and I'll buy her anything she wants. (What with the terrible exchange ratio, this only costs me \$1,800, my entire year's income for writing.) My husband doesn't come with us, and is in fact a no-show for the rest of the holiday. The smog, drizzly weather and 12-hour jet lag gives him a case of bronchitis that would topple a Cape buffalo.

On the last day of our visit, we go for a train ride to Groningen and (briefly) it snows. My daughter has seen ocean waves as big as houses. She's paddled a surfboard over sharks that could take your arm off in a splintered second. But she's never seen snow. To her the drifting white stuff is more enchanting than anything George Lucas ever built at Industrial Light and Magic.

The snow saves our visit to Holland. Almost.

On the plane ride home, I think about that rarest and loveliest of all words: “Santa.” Funny, I never appreciated it before. Thirty-eight thousand feet below is something that makes my heart swell almost as much. The glowing green mountains, fertile valleys and brooding beauty of another word I’ve often taken for granted: “America.”

My husband comes out of his coma long enough to grope for an appropriate word. “Hey. It’s...it’s...” Both of us peer out the airplane window, eyes glazed and dopey.

“Yeah,” I say. “Home.”

FUN STUFF, CONTESTS & OFFERS

Holiday Special – For Someone You Care About From Cheryl Swanson

Cheryl Swanson, suspense and non-fiction author, wrote *Busting Loose: Cancer Survivors Tell You What Your Doctor Won’t* when a confluence of events had her adopting a child from Guatemala, writing her first suspense novel and facing cancer—all at the same time. A holiday special on her books is available at <http://www.cherylschwanson.net>

Flash Fiction – Free! by Gloria Oliver

If our readers want free flash fiction, I've put up several pieces at my blog <http://www.gloriaoliver.blogspot.com> #FridayFlash is a Twitter/Facebook exercise where authors put out free flash fiction to share with others. I believe they've been getting around 40+ free flash fics a week on this. The hope is that when readers find something they like, they will pass it on and help get these authors more widely read.

Care to share a flash fiction piece of your own that involves writing?
Email it to: PageTurnerHome@aol.com with “Flash Fiction” as the subject line.
(See examples on Gloria’s site: <http://www.gloriaoliver.blogspot.com>)

Contest from L.C. Hayden

I love keeping in touch with my readers. The best way is through my newsletter. Consequently, the purpose of this contest will be to introduce new readers to the newsletter. The person who provides me with the most names of people willing to receive the newsletter will win either an ARC or a hardback copy of *When Death Intervenes* when it's released. The choice of whether you win an ARC or the actual book will be yours to make.

Make sure the person knows you're submitting his/her name and e-mail address and is subscribing to receive the free newsletter. This contest will close in mid-January, so you have plenty of time to gather names. Send your entries to lchauthor@yahoo.com Now, go out, talk to your friends and send in those names!

Holiday Greetings

It amazes me that I just typed that. We got back from the working cruise to the Panama Canal and bang, the next week is Thanksgiving—already. What ever happened to time?

I hope your day is filled with love, happiness, family, laughter, and plenty of good food. Take time to reflect on your blessings. Hope you had the greatest of Thanksgivings!

Also, since the next newsletter won't reach you until after Christmas, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

Want to see YOUR name and promotional information here?

(and also longer term on Joan Hall's website)?

See Contest information at: <http://www.joanuptonhall.com/bb.htm#tips>

See earlier winner(s) (on-going) at: <http://www.joanuptonhall.com/winners.html>

READERS ASK AUTHORS

HOT SEAT

People are always asking us, "Where did you come up with (such-and-such character, idea, place, etc.)?" Okay, so here's YOUR chance to find out. Each month, we'll put the previous month's Author of the Month on the hot seat to come up with a short answer.

L.C. Hayden is our Featured Author for this month, so check out her website and books and ask away. **Of all questions received, we'll draw one. Please send your questions by the middle of next month.**

Send your question (**and a sentence or two about yourself if you desire**) to: PageTurnerHome@aol.com or to the author directly through his or her website shown on Page 1.

If your question is chosen, we'll credit you.

FOR YOU READERS WHO ALSO WRITE

Classic Mystery Writers: What Made Them So Popular? by Dave Ciambrone

This is the third in a series in which **Dr. Ciambrone** covers highlights of great fictional detectives from Radio, books, movies and TV.

Sherlock Holmes and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, A brief look at the famous men

Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's brilliant detective, arrived on the mystery scene in the late nineteenth century in "A Study in Scarlet" (1887). Holmes possessed a singular style unlike any detective seen before. With his distinctive style and his flair for deducing clues, Holmes, with his ever-reliable sidekick, Dr. Watson, quickly became indispensable to mystery readers everywhere. The genius of Conan Doyle was reflected in his creation of a character whose intelligence was formidable, turning the solving of crimes into a science. Readers may have found his deductive powers too intimidating were it not for the presence of Dr. Watson, always nearby to bring Holmes back down to earth with the soothing voice of reason. Holmes became the father of forensic methods.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, (1859-1930), was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. He studied to be a doctor at the University of Edinburgh and set up a small practice at Southsea in Hampshire during his 20s. While the practice proved largely unsuccessful, the lack of patients provided him with the opportunity to create possibly the most popular character ever introduced in the history of fiction, Sherlock Holmes. While at University, Conan Doyle had been greatly influenced by John Bell, one of his professors. Bell was an expert in the use of deductive reasoning to diagnose disease. Conan Doyle was so impressed that he used these same principles when creating his famous detective.

Sherlock Holmes was introduced in "A Study in Scarlet" (1887), followed by "A Sign of Four" in 1890, but didn't really take hold of the public's imagination until *Strand* magazine, newly founded in 1890, published a series of short stories called "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes." From that point on the public couldn't get enough of Holmes and his always reliable confidant, John H. Watson, a retired military doctor. Residing in London at 221B Baker Street, Holmes's character and personality set him apart from all others. "Holmes, with his keen sense of observation, his lean face and hooked nose, his long legs, his deerstalker hat, his magnifying glass, and his ever-present pipe. This personality is what caught the reader's imagination."

From 1891 to 1893, *Strand* published stories featuring Holmes and Watson, all avidly followed by the public. When in "The Final Problem" (1893), Holmes and his longtime nemesis, Professor Moriarty, are killed off, the public outcry was so great, Conan Doyle was forced to bring him back to life. He continued the exploits of Holmes and Watson nine years later in "The Hound of the Baskervilles" (1902).

More novels and short stories appeared to the delight of Conan Doyle's fans until *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* (1927), the last to feature the brilliant sleuth. Sherlock Holmes is without doubt one of the most beloved figures in the history of mystery fiction. Conan Doyle's works were made into several stage plays, television shows and feature films. In all, Holmes and Watson were featured in four novels and 56 short stories.

Despite the success of his most famous character, throughout his adult life, Conan Doyle sought to escape the Sherlock Holmes phenomenon and concentrate on writing about his other interests. Although he was never completely successful due to the intense popularity of Holmes,

he was knighted for his nonfiction work on the *Boer War* and also wrote other historical works such as *The White Company* (1890).

How-to Advice a Couple of Clicks Away **ONGOING COLUMNS for WRITERS:**

Ask the Book Doctor: Freelance editor, **Joan Upton Hall**, answers writers' questions. Past issues, first published in various newsletters, also appear on her own: <http://www.joanuptonhall.com/bb.htm> (scroll down and click the link for "Ask Doc" Q&A's).

Have an article about writing or book groups? If it would interest our readers, we'll be happy to print it. We can't pay at this time, but it will serve as a published clip with your byline. Reprints accepted with notice of first publication. Submission guidelines:

1. Send as an attached Word document.
2. Up to 800 words (If editor condenses it, you will have a chance to approve before printing)
3. A short blurb about you as a writer and your website if you have one.
4. Email to: PageTurnerHome@aol.com or jmuHall@aol.com with subject line: "PT submission"

HEADS UP FOR AUTHOR SIGHTINGS

December through early January, 2010- If you're in the area, stop and see us!

(For private appearances, such as private book clubs, check with author)

L. C. Hayden

Dec. 1 and 3, 6-8 PM: Writing Dynamic Dialog: U.T. El Paso

Diane Fanning - HEB book signings in December

Sat. Dec 12th, 12pm to 2pm at 1150 N.W. FM 1604 at Blanco Rd in San Antonio.

Sun. Dec 13th, 1pm to 3pm, at 20935 Hwy 281 North in San Antonio.

Sat. Dec 19th, 1pm to 3pm, at 5800 W. Slaughter Lane at Escarpment, in Austin.

Sylvia Dickey Smith & Joan Upton Hall

Dec. 5, Sat. 10-4: Celebrating Georgetown's Christmas Stroll on the Historic Square – We'll be at Hill Country Book Store, selling books, talking to customers, and serving hot wassail.