

# CROSS

To coincide with the release of Robert Galbraith's latest installment in the Cormoran Strike series, The Silkwork, after hrs takes a look at the 8 most famous and intriguing detectives to have ever graced the pages or the big screen

## THE WHO'S WHO OF THE WHODUNNITS

Ludovic Sappa Cohen



### Sherlock Holmes

Arthur Conan Doyle

We kick off our list of top detectives with the undisputed king of the genre: Sherlock Holmes. Arthur Conan Doyle's famous creation only appears in 4 full novels, of which The Hound of the Baskervilles (1902) is the most famous, yet puts his skills of deduction into use in a staggering 56 short stories. So what makes Holmes so popular? "To my mind, a detective has to be larger than life: more intelligent than others... almost superhuman. But that needs to be balanced with foibles. Hercule Poirot has a fetish for order, Sherlock Holmes injects himself with cocaine. Adrian Monk has OCD, Inspector Morse is an intellectual snob, Jack Frost is incapable of following an order and Jane Tennison is a drunk.



### Robert Langdon

Dan Brown

Famously played by Tom Hanks in the Dan Vinci Code (2006) and Angels and Demons (2009), Robert Langdon is a sought-after Harvard Professor of Symbolology who finds himself called to help when strange events happen around the world. Interestingly, Dan Brown created the character as a fictional alter-ego of himself or 'the man he wishes he could be'. Yet, while there are similarities with Sherlock Holmes' character in the use of logic to deduce 'who dunnit', it is more about the knowledge that Langdon already possesses which can be used to unlock mysteries. Indeed, Langdon's star has risen so rapidly since his first appearance in book pages that the Robert Langdon series is currently the seventh highest-selling series of all time, with over 200 million copies sold after producing only six books — a higher sales to book ratio than anyone above him on the list.



### Inspector Clouseau

Blake Edwards

Chief Inspector Jacques Clouseau is a differ-



### CHARACTER SKETCH

A writer who has penned pacy thrillers, Ashwin Sanghi knows a thing or two about what it takes to create unforgettable characters. With the soon-to-be released book, Private India, for which he has teamed up with internationally renowned author, James Patterson, Sanghi has tried his hand at drawing up Santosh Wagh, an ex-RAW agent, whom he hopes his readers will love. The author in a Q&A:

#### What makes a popular detective?

The detective in a crime novel is the pivot on which the story turns. To my mind, a detective has to be larger than life: more intelligent than others... almost superhuman. But that needs to be balanced with foibles. Hercule Poirot has a fetish for order, Sherlock Holmes injects himself with cocaine. Adrian Monk has OCD, Inspector Morse is an intellectual snob, Jack Frost is incapable of following an order and Jane Tennison is a drunk.

#### Is that what you will be doing in the Private India series with James Patterson?

As regards Private India, the common figure across Private novels is Jack Morgan, the global head of Private, ex-CIA, ex-Marines. In India, his lead investigator is Santosh Wagh, an ex-RAW agent. Dark and brooding, Santosh has many secrets hidden away inside of him. Creating and fleshing out his character was by far the most interesting part of this project. It was also the biggest challenge. I believe that Santosh Wagh's character is enhanced by his messed up personal life, the dark secrets that he carries and his friendship with Mr. Johnnie Walker.

#### Is there a particular author who inspired you to start creating your own

ent kind of detective altogether. Created as part of Blake Edwards' farcical Pink Panther series, Clouseau is the French Suret's most embarrassing, inept and ultimately successful police detective. Frequently in pursuit of one idiot theory or another, Clouseau is renowned for making a fool of himself and others — a point perhaps embodied by an iconic scene from the 1976 film The Pink Panther Strikes Again, starring Peter Sellers, in which Clouseau's attempt to interview witnesses results in him destroying a priceless painting, getting his hand stuck in a vase and shooting an officer. Yet, Clouseau still manages to get the job done — albeit with the help of incredible strokes of luck. Also an animated series, the Pink Panther has received international praise for wedding together the detective and comedy genres.

### The Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin

Edgar Allan Poe



Based in Paris where he lives with his unnamed companion and narrator of the stories, Dupin bears the title 'Chevalier' to denote that he is a knight in the Légion d'honneur. Dupin later reappears in the novels The Mystery of Marie Rogêt (1842) and The Purloined Letter (1844), where he establishes himself as an eccentric much like the later Sherlock Holmes. Indeed, Conan Doyle once asked, 'Where was the detective story until Poe breathed the breath of life into it?'

#### detectives?

There are many. I was always addicted to Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle's works. In addition authors such as P. D. James, Patricia Cornwell, Thomas Harris and Mary Higgins Clark also succeeded in whetting my appetite for crime novels.

#### You must have a favourite detective...

Sherlock Holmes is by far my favourite. I have always loved characters that have a darker side to them. I am referring to the drug habit of Holmes and his historical enmity with Professor Moriarty. In the Danish TV series Forbrydelsen — The Killing — the detective character of Sarah Lund is also incredibly messed up personal life and stubborn defiance of authority.

#### Finally, why do you think detective stories have become so popular?

Several reasons. Every detective story is also a quiz. It gives the reader a chance to put together the jigsaw puzzle before the solution is presented. The second reason is that we all like stories in which good, truth and justice prevail. A detective story has to end with a solved crime and hence provides a sense of satisfaction. Lastly, of course, we are all fascinated by crime, irrespective of whether we read about it in the newspapers, hear about it on television or read a detective novel.

### Miss Marple

Agatha Christie



Unique as an elderly spinster, Miss Marple became one of Agatha Christie's most beloved characters since her first appearance in The Sketch magazine in 1926. But what made readers around the world flock to buy Christie's books? Well, Miss Marple was the gentlewoman of the so-called 'Golden Age of Detective fiction' in which gentlemen dominated. It was in this context that Christie became known as one of the 'Queens of Crime' alongside the likes of Dorothy L. Sayers. Miss Marple, the daughter of a clergyman and very much attached to her small village, achieves most of her detective feats through her deep knowledge of human nature — a point evidenced by the well of analogies and memories she draws from when seeking a deeper insight into the crime at hand.

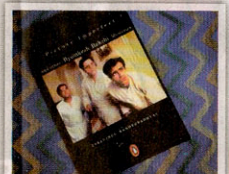


### Alex Cross

James Patterson

A former FBI agent and psychologist working out of Washington DC, Cross can be consid-

ered a more traditionally American detective that moves away from the plethora of British detectives on our list. Indeed, unlike the individuality of the Sherlock Holmes type, Cross is a model father who enjoys getting involved in the community — an aspect that has made his character more endearing to his American audience. However, prior to settling down with Detective Brianna 'Bree' Stone in the 17th novel from the series, Cross Fire (she was introduced in Double Cross, 2007), Alex has multiple James Bond-esque love interests, although the sheer number of women belies Alex's desire to find true love — another dimension of his complex character.

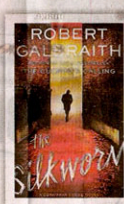


### Byomkesh Bakshi

Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay

Next on our list is Bengali author Bandyopadhyay's classic detective, Byomkesh Bakshi. Inspired by fabled gentleman detectives such as Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, Bandyopadhyay created a homegrown gentleman, although situated in a very ordinary, Indian context. Only relatively recently translated into English, the most famous Bakshi story is Picture Imperfect (originally Chitrachor, 1951), which uses Christie's 'least likely suspect' formula. Perhaps his most distinctive trait though is his altruism; Bakshi believed in reforming many of the criminals he caught and not simply handing them over to the police, hence his sometimes rocky relationship with the powers of law and order. This positivity arose from Bandyopadhyay's reaction to the destruction of war — an attempt to fight the gloom and rediscover the notion that justice will prevail.

### Cormoran Strike



Barely two novels old he is the new snoonop on the block who, if it were not for the atmospheric fame of his creator — JK Rowling writing as Robert Galbraith, may have gone unnoticed. While her pseudonym was outed, reportedly annoying Mrs. Rowling, we'll say it was all for a good cause, because Cormoran Strike, the one-footed (he'd lost his right leg to a land mine in Afghanistan) giant of a man with curly hair and a messed up love life, does a bang up job as a detective. While he might not have super-observatory powers a la Mr. Holmes, Strike is diligent; he takes copious notes and doesn't shrink from interviewing the suspects, even if it means slugging it to the suburbs of London and beyond in a metro. A good listener, in the end, it is his unassuming intuition and his attractive and competent secretary Robin Ellacott, that help him crack the cases. Oh, and did we mention that he is the illegitimate child of a rock star? The paps in the book love it, so do we. News has it that there are five more Strike novels in the pipeline.