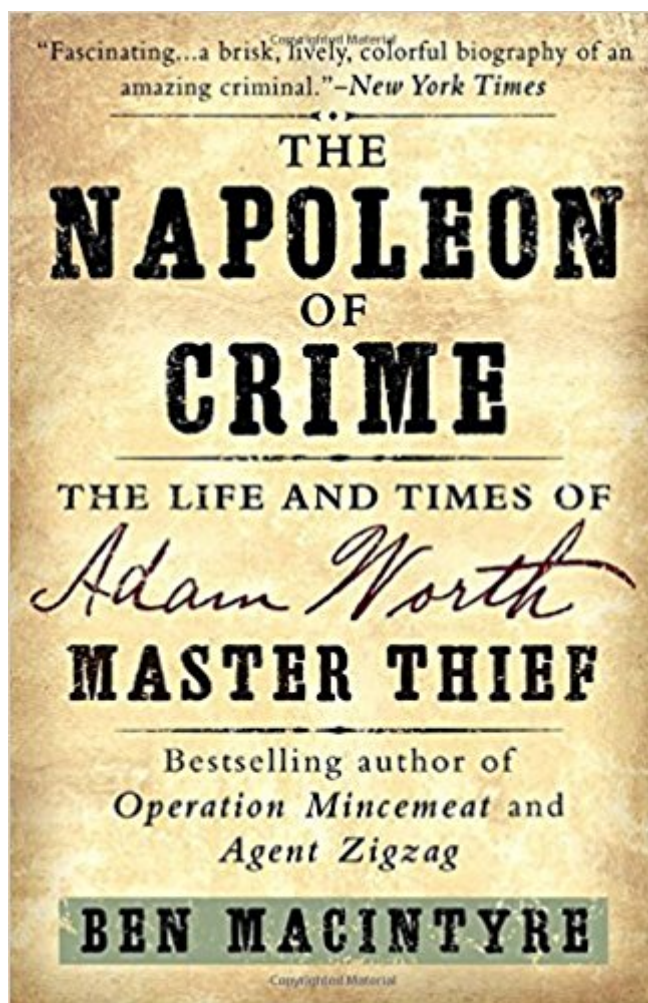


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The Napoleon Of Crime: The Life And Times Of Adam Worth, Master Thief



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF A SPY AMONG FRIENDS
He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. . . . --Sherlock Holmes on Professor Moriarty in "The Final Problem"
The Victorian era's most infamous thief, Adam Worth was the original Napoleon of crime. Suave, cunning Worth learned early that the best way to succeed was to steal. And steal he did. Following a strict code of honor, Worth won the respect of Victorian society. He also aroused its fear by becoming a chilling phantom, mingling undetected with the upper classes, whose valuables he brazenly stole. His most celebrated heist: Gainsborough's grand portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire--ancestor of Diana, Princess of Wales--a painting Worth adored and often slept with for twenty years. With a brilliant gang that included "Piano" Charley, a jewel thief, train robber, and playboy, and "the Scratch" Becker, master forger, Worth secretly ran operations from New York to London, Paris, and South Africa--until betrayal and a Pinkerton man finally brought him down. In a decadent age, Worth was an icon. His biography is a grand, dazzling tour into the gaslit underworld of the last century. and into the doomed genius of a criminal mastermind.

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Customer Reviews

"Fascinating...a brisk, lively, colorful biography of an amazing criminal."--The New York Times
"Adam Worth, the greatest thief of the 19th century, could have furnished the basis of a great

novel...Ben Macintyre has given him a biography that reads like one."--Los Angeles Times Book Review
A New York Times Notable Book

BEN MACINTYRE is a writer-at-large for The Times of London and the bestselling author of *A Spy Among Friends*, *Double Cross*, *Operation Mincemeat*, *Agent Zigzag*, *The Napoleon of Crime*, and *Forgotten Fatherland*, among other books. Macintyre has also written and presented BBC documentaries of the wartime espionage trilogy.

Ben MacIntyre is quickly becoming one of my favorite authors. His penchant for writing about real life interesting characters with great research and storytelling catapults him far ahead of the writing herd. This time out he tells us about Master Thief Adam Worth, 'the Napoleon of Crime' who gave Sir Arthur Conan Doyle more than a little nudge of inspiration for his Sherlock Holmes's arch villain, Professor Moriarty. Worth, a transplanted American, also gave Scotland Yard a few headaches, and was always a primary person of interest for dang near every other police agency in the U.S., Europe and even a diamond heist in South Africa. Better still, Macintyre gives us a good glimpse of the crime world of the Victorian era on both sides of the Atlantic, the efforts and reach of the Pinkerton Detective Agency, and the failings and flaws of the criminals themselves who show that while crime does pay their money management skills are few and far between. This book is surprisingly entertaining and I can only echo the tone of the previous five star reviews. It is well worth a read. Starting another of your books, Mack and looking forward to it!

The subject matter was interesting sometimes fascinating. The author wove together a variety of topics over that overlapped. I learned a lot about the time period as well as the characters. However, there is a huge section which is very slow reading, and overburdened with speculation and seemingly extravagant description. I almost stopped reading due to this. I kept going and was rewarded with the last quarter of the book being quicker paced, less hyperbole, and more focused.

I really like Ben Macintyre's style of writing, and this book was no exception. I had no idea that Arthur Conan Doyle's Professor Moriarty character is largely based on Adam Worth, the globetrotting master thief that this book is about. He faked his own death in the Civil War, assumed a fake name, stole from countless banks and jewelers around the world, swiped a famous work of art, and ran an illegal gambling parlor in Paris, yet he was nonetheless extremely likeable. The book reads a little bit like an "Ocean's 11" type of story - Adam Worth seemed to be able to steal anything

he put his mind to stealing, but he somehow still appeared to be a decent man. He abhorred violence and refused to use weapons in the commission of his crimes, he was generous (to a fault), and he never stole from people who couldn't afford it. He had a bevy of thieves in his employ, some of whom he even sprang from prison, and he took good care of his brother (who was a fool but also an extortionist who preyed on Adam Worth's generosity and loyalty). Ultimately, the book is a little sad, because I found myself liking Adam Worth, but his death was somewhat unremarkable and a little lonely, which I suppose is to be expected when you have lived an entirely dishonest life. His relationship with William Pinkerton, the famous detective, is also a little sad, because the friendship they developed later in life seemed borne out of the loneliness of two old men with more in common than you might think. But overall, this is a fun and interesting read. Ben Macintyre has a very dry sense of humor that I love, which made the book that much more enjoyable. I highly recommend.

Wow! I LOVED this book! It truly read like a fictional novel. I was actively engaged in the book from the very first page. I recommend this to anyone who loves a mystery and the best part of this one is that is TRUE. Ben MacIntyre's tireless research into the HIStory of Adam Worth is evident in this book. Adam Worth is the foundation of the character "Moriarty" in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes pieces. Not only that but Mr. MacIntyre also describes how the Pinkertons evolved from private detectives to the massive security organization they are known to be today. Not too mention some of the inner workings of the underworld and the art world.

I was only able to make it through five chapters. Usually I don't quit a book that I've started but I just couldn't take any more of this book. It is extremely dry and the author goes into excruciating details about every person during this time period except the subject of the book. In the beginning the author states there isn't much known about Adam Worth and after reading five chapters I still don't know anything about him. I don't know how this book got such good reviews but there are too many good books out there, don't waste your time and money on this one.

Macintyre lives up to his well-earned reputation with this one. He has become one of my top ten authors. His research for "ancient" biography is amazing. The characters come alive as does their action. There are chills and spills and many laughs as the story develops. It's a very good read about a master thief whose antics are often quite unexpected but never life-threatening. He exhibits leadership and a gentlemanly approach toward everyone including his arch rival with whom he occasionally sits and has a pleasant chat. You'll have fun with this one!

Too much of this book was devoted to Macintyre salesmanship. So much wasted effort trying to show Worth as the inspiration for Moriarity was just promotion. If Worth was the inspiration for a fictional character it was more likely Raffles, the cracksman created by E.W. Hornung, Conan Doyle's brother-in-law and IMHO, a more careful author than Conan Doyle, who would have us believe that Holmes could tell a bicycle's direction of travel by its tire prints and who had people visiting Buckingham Palace centuries before its existence.

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