

Movies & Languages 2012-2013

About the movie (subtitled version)

DIRECTOR	Guy Ritchie
YEAR / COUNTRY	2009 / USA, UK, Australia
GENRE	Action
ACTORS	Robert Downey Jr., Rachel McAdams, Jude Law, Mark Strong, Eddie Marsan



FILM SYNOPSIS

There are many great things in this film, which take Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to new levels of interest. One, is the acting. The king is Downey Jr. He is brilliant in refreshing Holmes character. The man is capable of working his performances in several directions, and each of them is a perfect link to its surroundings. He introduces humour, irony, and self-awareness in every character he portrays. He invests totally on the creation of a character who merges with the textures of the context, while being distinct from it. As in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's writing style, he includes the audience into his mystery solving so we experience everything with him. Downey Jr. makes this film successful, because he alone solves one of the most basic problems with any film: to find a channel into the character. He is one of the best actors ever. Jude Law is also an interesting actor whose greatest quality is how he merges anonymously with the context he is intended to integrate. He willingly becomes a piece of a larger tapestry. The result is an incredible sense of placement. London in the XIX century. All those dirty muddy streets, the fascination of the inner locations, namely the midget's laboratory. How those sets are usable, in the action scenes which are all perfectly rendered and carefully photographed. What was really striking was the use of the London bridge. Notice how it is announced, early in the film, with a similar perspective to the one we get at the end. The angle opens, we move away, and we are set up in the location for the final fight scene, which in its own merits is quite good. This was an interesting example of actually using an impressive historical location, instead of merely showing it.

LANGUAGE

Queen's English (Robert Downey Jr.) and very precise British by Jude Law. Police recite in street accents.

GRAMMAR

Direct and indirect speech

When we report people's words, thoughts, beliefs etc., we can give the exact words (more or less) that were said, or that we imagine were thought. This kind of structure is called "direct speech" (though it is used for reporting thoughts as well as speech). For example:

So he said, **"I want to go home,"**
She asked, **"What do you want?"**
And then I thought, **"Well, does he really mean it?"**

We can also make somebody's words or thoughts part of our own sentence, using conjunctions (e.g. *that*), and changing pronouns, tenses and other words where necessary. This kind of structure is called "indirect speech" or "reported speech". For example:

So he said that **he wanted to go home**, and just walked out.
She asked **what I wanted**.
And then I wondered **whether he really meant it**.

These two structures cannot normally be mixed. For example:

She said to me **"I have got not money"**. OR She said to me **that she had got no money**. BUT NOT
She said to me that I have got no money.

VOCABULARY

A lad: a young boy	Bascule: a device or structure, such as a drawbridge, counterbalanced so that when one end is lowered the other is raised
Anaesthetic: an agent which produces local or general loss of sensation including pain	Catatonic: a state of mental stupor and muscular rigidity
Armory: a place used for weapon storage	Conduit: a conveyance or channel
Chatter: to talk rapidly in a foolish or purposeless way	Caw: a crow's call
Discombobulate: to throw into a state of confusion	Nefarious: extremely wicked or villainous
To flick: a light splash	Revolver: a gun that holds six cartridges on an internal wheel
Infirmary: a place for the care of the sick or wounded	Waistcoat: a vest or a sleeveless upper-body garment
Strumming: a way of playing a stringed instrument	Whistling: a sound made by a stream of air passing through a hole; (e.g.) a whistling tea kettle
Toll: the sound of a bell being struck	Frenzy: a state of violent mental agitation or wild excitement
A wager: a matter bet on; a gamble	Mortuary: a place where dead bodies are kept before burial
Perish: to become destroyed or ruined: cease to exist	Riddle: a statement, question or phrase having a double meaning put forth as a puzzle to be solved; an enigma
To get wind of: learn of; hear a rumour about (idiomatic expression)	To regale: to provide with great enjoyment; entertain, delight or amuse
A figure of speech: an expression that uses language in a non literal way; a rhetorical device that achieves a special effect by using words in distinctive ways	Doilies: lace or crochet ornamental mats originating from a 17th-century London draper