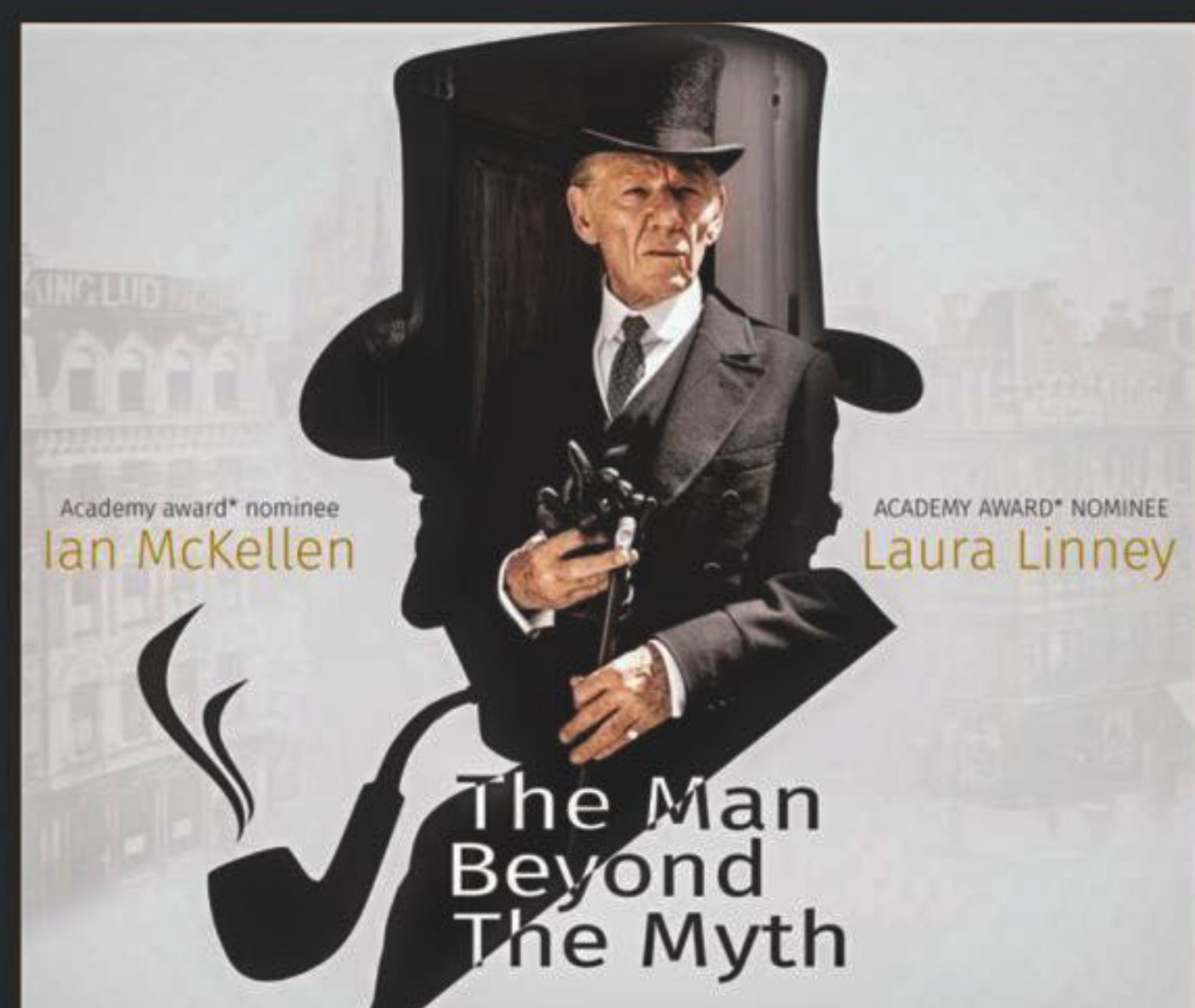


# MR. HOLMES



**Director:** Bill Condon  
**Writers:** Mitch Cullin, Jeffrey Hatcher  
**Stars:** Ian McKellen, Laura Linney, Hiroyuki Sanada  
**Strengths:** McKellen's Performance  
**Weakness:** Plot is slightly flimsy  
**Runtime:** 104 minutes  
**Rating:** 4/5

**PLOT:** An aged, retired Sherlock Holmes looks back on his life, and grapples with an unsolved case involving a beautiful woman.

**REVIEW:** Sherlock Holmes is back, but we have never seen a Sherlock like this before. The new Mr. Holmes is a completely different take on Arthur Conan Doyle's legendary detective.

"Mr. Holmes," a mild and minor bit of revisionist Sherlockiana, imagines the world's greatest detective in his dotage, retired to a picturesque rural spot on the English coast where he tends to bees and fading memories. It's 1947, and Holmes is in his 90s. Dr. Watson is long gone, and it turns out that the pipe and the deerstalker cap were fictitious embellishments. The keen ratiocinative powers that made Holmes an early hero of modern popular culture are still in evidence, though the cases he has left to solve are of a decidedly intimate, melancholy nature. No spectacular murders or intricate conspiracies: just quiet enigmas of memory and remorse.

The film's plots are soft and flimsy, and they don't mesh as gracefully as they might, but they do serve as an adequate trellis for Mr. McKellen's performance, which is gratifyingly but unsurprisingly wonderful. With his craggy visage and papery diction, his Holmes is a study in wry, intellectual charisma. It isn't hard to imagine Benedict Cumberbatch, the kinetic, intensely focused Sherlock of the BBC series, aging into this mellow codger.

The film suggests that there is much about Sherlock Holmes that his fans don't know. It's most ingenious conceit is that the real man has grown old alongside his legend, slipping into theaters to watch movies made about his exaggerated exploits and gently correcting some of Watson's fabrications. A long retirement has humanized him, and the specific longings and regrets chronicled in "Mr. Holmes" might constitute only a partial list. This is Holmes as many of us have never even thought of and that's what leads to its unique appeal.

Reviewed by Intisab Shahriyar

## CLASSIC REVIEW

# SCARECROW (1973)

**Director:** Jerry Schatzberg  
**Writers:** Garry Michael White  
**Stars:** Gene Hackman, Al Pacino, Dorothy Tristan  
**Runtime:** 112 minutes

**PLOT:** Max, an ex-con drifter with a penchant for brawling is amused by Lion, a homeless ex-sailor, and they partner up as they head east together.  
**REVIEW:** Jerry Schatzberg's "Scarecrow" is a stunningly made movie with Gene Hackman and Al Pacino giving the performances of their lives as two drifters who team up in the hope of setting up a carwash business in Pittsburgh. It is simply a masterpiece of the American new wave, a rangy, freewheeling tragicomedy in which Hackman and Pacino give effortlessly charismatic performances. Max (Hackman) has just been released from prison; he's itching to start the business he's been dreaming about in the joint – and all too obviously itching to get into another of the fights that put him in prison in the first place. Francis (Pacino) has been away at sea, sending money home to the mother of his child and now, muddled and penitent, he yearns to visit them. It's a wonderfully muted performance from Pacino: Dustin Hoffman would have cranked it up far



higher. The guys ride the boxcars; they get drunk and into trouble. They even wind up in prison – briefly. And their chaotic, fragile friendship is all that they have. This is a jewel of American cinema.

Reviewed by Mohaiminul Islam



# SINGH IS BLIING

**Director:** Prabhudheva  
**Writers:** Chintan Gandhi  
**Stars:** Akshay Kumar, Amy Jackson, Lara Dutta  
**Strength:** Comedy elements. Acting  
**Weakness:** Overplayed plot  
**Runtime:** 140 minutes  
**Rating:** 3.5/5

**PLOT:** An adorable Raftaar Singh is a no do-gooder in the eyes of his disciplined father as he's jobless. He is thus sent off to Goa from Punjab, hoping he'll find ways to fend for himself.

**REVIEW:** Akshay Kumar plays Raftaar Singh, a good-for-nothing Punjabi lad whose chief qualification is that he's a momma's boy. Raftaar's father has a friend in Goa who runs a casino. When Raftaar takes Rs 50,000 from his father's cupboard without permission, his dad tells Raftaar that he's got to grow up by either marrying an overweight village belle or going to work in Goa. In Goa, Raftaar meets a woman who is more than his match. Sara (Amy Jackson) is an arms dealer's daughter who

catches the eye of deranged gangster Mark (Kay Kay Menon). What better way to deal with an insane Indo-Romanian stalker than to chill out in Goa, at her dad's friend's bungalow? Raftaar is appointed as Sara's chaperone in Goa. She doesn't speak Hindi. He doesn't speak English. Enter Lara Dutta as the translator, Emily.

Don't go expecting logic in the story, as this is a quirky comedy that solely relies on superstar Akshay's swag to keep you entertained. Amy Jackson is a revelation as she plays her feisty character well and so do the supporting actors. Lara Dutta also does an incredible job with a comedic role. However, it is Akshay, who makes you giggle be it with his innocence, seasoned comic timing or bizarre fashion sense.

There's nothing evolved or sophisticated about this film, but that doesn't mean it's not worth a watch. Singh is Bliing is just as funny as the original film was and that's just fine.

Reviewed by Intisab Shahriyar