

EDWARD
STRATEMEYER

*The Man
Who Created
Nancy Drew*



Bruce Watson





EDWARD STRATEMEYER

*The Man
Who Created
Nancy Drew*

Bruce Watson



EDWARD STRATEMEYER: THE MAN WHO CREATED
NANCY DREW

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

COPYRIGHT

EDWARD STRATEMEYER: THE MAN WHO CREATED NANCY DREW

On the loveliest of spring mornings in 1910, a middle-aged juvenile awoke in his peaceful New Jersey home and began to dream. Showering, he outlined a lively scenario for Dorothy Dale, *A Girl of Today*. Dressing in tight starched collar, suspenders, and tweed, he sent Jack Ranger and his chums in search of danger. Shaving, he chuckled over the mishaps of some adorable twins at the seashore. And if he seemed distracted at breakfast, blame it on the lion he was stalking with his electric rifle.

*“Tom’s killed him with his electric rifle!” cried Mr. Damon.
“Bless my dynamo! But that’s a wonderful gun; it’s as powerful
as a thunderbolt, or as gentle as a summer shower.”*

On the train to Manhattan, his wire-rimmed glasses, wavy hair, and Victorian demeanor might have labeled the man a deacon or schoolmaster, but in his own mind he was Baseball Joe pitching on a boarding school nine. Walking up 25th Avenue, the author became a young sleuth bound for action and plenty of it! A block from his office, a speeding car went out of control and bolted straight for him! In a flash, the wide-awake detective leapt out of harm’s way! That was close! But look! A runaway truck was bearing down on a woman

and her two helpless children! Without missing a beat, our brave hero leapt into the cab! He slammed on the brakes and guided the hulking vehicle to a halt!

“What luck!” he remarked to himself.

By the time he reached his office, his imagination was in fifth gear. He summoned his secretary and for the rest of the day, if anyone called, he was out on adventures. Who was the mysterious author? He was: Arthur M. Winfield, Captain Ralph Bonehill, Alice B. Emerson, Roy Rockwood, Chester K. Steele, Margaret Penrose, Captain Quincy Allen, Laura Lee Hope, Jack Lancer, and about 90 other names. But at five o’clock when he caught the train back home, he was himself again, Edward Stratemeyer.

Even to his millions of readers, Edward Stratemeyer needs a lengthy introduction. Ask a librarian to name the most influential American author and the usual suspects will be trotted out. But ask who, disguised as numerous mild-mannered scribes, dominated his genre as no other author before or since, and there are some bets to be won around the juvenile section of your local library.

Edward Stratemeyer was not a mere author; he was a literary machine. Like the upwardly mobile characters of his early stories, he was an innocent in the promised land, a dime novel writer who struck it rich. Between 1900 and 1930, he turned his uncanny sense of young readers’ tastes into an action and adventure factory that churned out more than 1,300 juvenile novels in 125 different series written under 100 distinct and slightly stilted pseudonyms.

From this one imagination came the fearless deep sea diver Dave Fearless, the dashing aviator Dave Dashaway, and “manly, up-to-date” young men like the Rover Boys, the Darewell Chums, Don Sturdy, and Joe Strong. For girls, Stratemeyer created the first action heroines, including Ruth Fielding, the Outdoor Girls, and the Moving Picture Girls.