

SHERLOCK

A STUDY IN PINK



Meet Sherlock Holmes – the world's most brilliant detective!



SCHOLASTIC

A STUDY IN PINK

SHERLOCK HOLMES He's the most brilliant detective ever and the police often come to him for help. But they don't find him easy to work with.

DR JOHN WATSON He was an army doctor in Afghanistan, before returning to London after he was injured. His life changes completely when he meets Sherlock Holmes.

**MRS HUDSON**

Years ago Sherlock helped Mrs Hudson when she was a difficult situation. Now she is his landlady at her flat in Baker Street.

**DETECTIVE INSPECTOR LESTRADE**

He is a detective with the London police. When he starts investigating four mysterious deaths, he knows that he needs Sherlock's help.

**SERGEANT DONOVAN**

She is a police officer who works with Lestrade. She dislikes and distrusts Sherlock.

**JENNIFER WILSON**

She is one of the four victims of crime. Her body is found in an empty flat.

PLACES

221B Baker Street Sherlock Holmes and John Watson share this flat in the centre of London.



St Barts Hospital Many years ago, John Watson trained to be a doctor at this London hospital. Sherlock Holmes sometimes still goes there to use the lab for his experiments.



A STUDY IN PINK

Prologue

John Watson was having another nightmare. It was always the same – he was back in Afghanistan with the sounds of war all around him – guns firing, bombs exploding and army officers shouting orders to their men. As usual, the nightmare reminded him of the confusion of war and the terrible feeling that any moment might be his last.

John woke up, breathing hard, and stared into the darkness of his small flat. His mind took several long seconds to realize that he was no longer in Afghanistan – his days in the army were over now.



John was unable to sleep for the rest of that night. When the grey light of day finally appeared beyond his curtains, he sat down in front of his laptop. Ella, his therapist, had suggested that he should keep a daily blog. She had said that it would help him to 'move on with his life'.

He looked now at the laptop screen. Underneath his name at the top – Dr John Watson – the screen was empty. John stared at it and wondered what he

could write. What words could give even the smallest idea of how he was feeling?

* * *

Later that morning John sat down opposite Ella for his weekly meeting. Since he had returned from the army, he had walked with a limp. Now he carried a walking stick at all times. Putting his walking stick down beside him, he stretched out his legs and gave Ella an unsmiling look. He knew exactly what she was going to ask about.

'How's your blog going?'

'It's good,' he answered immediately. 'Very good.'

Ella wrote a few words in her notebook and then looked up at him. 'You haven't written a word in it, have you?'

John pointed at the therapist's notebook. 'You've just written that I "still have problems trusting people",' he said.

'And you've just read my writing upside down,' replied Ella. 'Do you see what I mean? Problems trusting people ...'

She continued to look straight at him. 'John, you were in a war,' she said gently. 'It's going to take a while to get used to life out of the army. Writing a blog about everything that happens to you will really help.'

John shook his head. 'Nothing happens to me,' he said flatly.

CHAPTER 1

The first meeting

Talking to the press was not Detective Inspector Lestrade's favourite part of being a police officer, but it was a necessary part of the job. And on a day like this, when the body of a politician, Beth Davenport, had been found dead, the press were hungry for information.

Lestrade was sitting at a long table at the front of the room, with one of his officers, Sergeant Donovan. She was explaining the facts about the politician's death to the waiting reporters in New Scotland Yard's press room. .



'Apparently the death was suicide,' she said. 'Certain elements were similar to the recent suicides of Jeffrey Patterson and James Phillmore. Because of this, we believe that there may be a connection between the three deaths.' Donovan's voice was flat – she was just giving the information as plainly as possible. But the reporters all knew that something unusual was happening here.

One of them raised his hand. 'Detective Inspector

Lestrade, how can there be a connection between three suicides?'

'Well, they all took the same poison,' began Lestrade carefully. 'They were all found in places where they had no reason to be. None of them had been acting strangely before their deaths ...'

'So what is the connection between them?' asked another reporter.

Lestrade moved uncomfortably in his chair. This was a difficult question to answer. 'We don't know yet, but there has to be one.'

Suddenly the room was filled with electronic sounds as every mobile phone there received a text message. The reporters all looked down to see the same message on their phones, just one word:

WRONG!

Sergeant Donovan received the same message on her phone. She looked up at all the reporters. 'If you've all got text messages, just ignore them,' she said crossly.

The reporters had more questions to ask. 'If the deaths are suicides, what are you investigating?'

'As I said, there's clearly some connection between these suicides. It's an unusual situation and we've got our best people working on the case ...'

Again, the room filled with the sounds of text messages arriving. Again it was just a one-word message:

WRONG!

A female reporter had her hand in the air now. 'Is there any chance that these deaths are murders?' she asked.

Lestrade took a deep breath. 'I know that you all like writing about killers,' he said carefully. 'But these do appear to be suicides. We do know the difference.'

'But if they are murders,' continued the woman reporter,

'how do people keep themselves safe?'

Lestrade chose his words carefully. 'Obviously this is a frightening time,' he began. 'But people just have to be sensible. We have no reason to feel unsafe.'

For the third time, every phone in the room received the same message:

WRONG!

'No more questions, thank you,' Donovan told the reporters quickly, standing up.

As he joined her, Lestrade received another text message. This one went to his phone only.

YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME. SH

* * *

As Lestrade and Donovan walked back to their offices, Donovan spoke angrily to her boss. 'You've got to stop him doing that. He's making us look stupid.'

'If you can tell me how he does it, I'll stop him,' he told Donovan.

It was a sunny day, but John Watson had no interest in enjoying the weather. He was on his way home, walking slowly across one of London's many parks, when he passed a man on a park seat.

'John!' The man jumped up. 'John Watson!'

John turned to see a large man smiling at him in surprised recognition. 'It's me – Mike Stamford!' said the man. 'We studied at St Barts Hospital together.'

At last John smiled back and offered his hand. 'Yes, sorry. Mike, hello.'



'I heard that you were abroad, in the army,' said Mike. 'What happened?'

John just pointed down to his bad leg and walking stick. 'I was shot.'

He didn't really want to discuss the past with an old friend, but Mike wouldn't take no for an answer. Ten minutes later they were both sitting on the park seat drinking coffee from plastic cups. Mike spoke a little about his work teaching new doctors. Then he asked John, 'So are you staying in town?'

John gave a little shake of the head. 'I can't afford to stay in London on the money I get from the army.'

Mike nodded. 'And you could never live anywhere else,' he said. 'That's not the John Watson I know.'

'I'm *not* the John Watson you know,' John answered, 'Why don't you share a flat with someone?' suggested Mike.

John smiled. 'Come on,' he told his old friend. 'Who'd want to share a flat with *me*?'

Mike laughed in surprise. 'You're the second person to say that to me today,' he said.

'Really?' said John, 'Who was the first?'

* * *

It felt strange to be back in the old hospital where John had studied years earlier. 'It looks a bit different from my day,' he was saying as Mike led him into his lab.

As they entered, a tall man with sharp, blue eyes and wavy dark hair turned from the work at his desk to look at them. 'Mike, can I borrow your phone? I need to send a text message.'

Mike's hand went to his jacket pocket. 'Sorry, I haven't got it with me. It's in my coat.'

John stepped forwards, phone in hand. 'Here, you can use my phone,' he said.

'Thank you.' As the tall man took the phone, his stare seemed to go right through John, examining his face, clothes, walking stick ... everything about him.

'Afghanistan or Iraq?' he asked.

'Sorry?' said John.

The tall man pointed at John's leg. 'Where did it happen, in Afghanistan or Iraq?'

'Afghanistan,' said John in surprise. 'Sorry, how did you know?'

The man gave no answer. After finishing with the phone, he went back to his work. A few moments later he gave John a quick look. 'How do you feel about the violin?'

John was confused. 'What do you mean?'

'I play the violin when I'm thinking,' said the tall man, 'and sometimes I don't talk for days. Would that be a problem? People should know all about each other if they're going to share a flat. There's a nice little place in the centre of London. Together we should be able to afford it.'

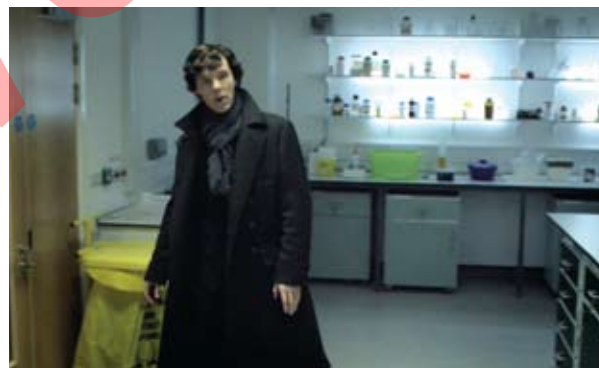
John felt as if he had missed half of this conversation. He looked at Mike. 'You told him about me?' John asked.

'Not a word.'

'Then who said anything about sharing a flat?'

The man was putting on a long coat. 'I did,' he said. 'I told Mike earlier today that I must be a difficult person to share a flat with. A few hours later, he's here with an old friend who was with the army. It's obvious. You must be looking for somewhere to live, if you've just come back from Afghanistan.'

'How did you know about that?' asked John. 'We don't know a thing about each other.'



The tall man didn't take his eyes off John. 'I know that you're an army doctor and that you're home after being hurt in Afghanistan. I know that you've got an older brother who's divorced – he's worried about you but you don't want to ask him for help. I know that your therapist thinks that your limp isn't a physical problem, but is all in your mind. And I know that he or she is correct.' He stopped at the lab door and looked back. 'My name is Sherlock Holmes,' he said. 'The address of the flat is 221B Baker Street – meet me there tomorrow at seven. Good afternoon.'

With those words, Sherlock left.

CHAPTER 2

'The game is on!'

The next day John arrived on foot at the flat on Baker Street at seven o'clock exactly. He had just knocked on the front door when a black taxi stopped at the side of the street and Sherlock Holmes jumped out.

'Hello,' he said, not seeming surprised to see that John had come.

John turned. 'Mr Holmes.'

'Call me Sherlock, please.'

John looked up at the front of the building. 'This is in a nice part of the city,' he said. 'It must be expensive.'

'The owner, Mrs Hudson, is giving me a special price on the rent,' explained Sherlock. 'A few years ago her husband was caught by the police in Florida. The courts wanted him to pay the maximum price – death. I was able to help.'

'So ... you saved her husband?' asked John.

Sherlock gave a little smile. 'Oh no. I made sure that he paid the full price.'

Before John could say anything to that, the door opened and a woman in her late fifties appeared. She smiled at Sherlock.

'Sherlock!' she said warmly. This was Mrs Hudson. To John she seemed like a nice, friendly lady. Sherlock introduced John and both men followed Mrs Hudson inside. While Sherlock ran up the stairs, it took John more time because of his bad leg. When he reached the first floor, Sherlock had already opened the door to the flat. John went in and looked around. The rooms were big with high ceilings – not cheap in this part of London.

There was just one problem: the place was messy. It

wasn't dirty, just untidy. There were books and papers and photos everywhere. The kitchen table was covered with science equipment of some kind. There were several boxes full of more papers and books on the floor.

'Well, this could be nice,' said John, nodding his head.

'Very nice indeed.'

'It just has to be tidied up,' he thought to himself. All this rubbish lying around ...'

'Yes,' agreed Sherlock. 'I thought so, too. So I moved my things in and ...'



John looked quickly at Sherlock. So 'all this rubbish' was Sherlock's stuff!

Quickly Sherlock began to move things around, picking

up a few papers and moving them to a different pile. 'Of course, I can tidy up,' he began. 'Well, a bit.'

Mrs Hudson appeared at the flat door. 'What do you think then, Dr Watson?'

John wasn't sure. He was still getting used to the sudden change in direction that his life had taken. Was he really going to share a flat with this strange man who he had only just met?

Mrs Hudson had noticed the kitchen. 'Oh Sherlock, look at the mess you've made!' She hurried into the kitchen and began to tidy up.

John sat down in one of the big chairs in the living room. 'I read about you on the Internet last night,' he told Sherlock.

'Anything interesting?'

'I found your website – *The Science of Detective Work*.'

'What did you think?' asked Sherlock.

'You said that you could identify a computer programmer by his tie, and an airline pilot by his left thumb.' It was clear from his voice that he didn't believe Sherlock.

'Yes,' said Sherlock. 'And I knew about your army life by looking at your face and limp, and about your brother from your mobile phone.'

John had been wondering about this ever since his first meeting with Sherlock. 'How?'

But before Sherlock answered, Mrs Hudson came back into the living room with a newspaper from the kitchen table. 'What about these suicides, Sherlock?' she asked, shaking her head at the news on the front page of Beth Davenport's death. 'Three of them, exactly the same.'

Sherlock was standing at the window. A police car with flashing lights had just stopped on the street outside.

Sherlock recognized the man who got out of it – Detective Inspector Lestrade of New Scotland Yard.

'Four,' he said simply. 'There's been a fourth suicide, and there's something different this time.'

Moments later Lestrade was in the flat. Sherlock didn't waste time. He just said one word to Lestrade. 'Where?'

'Brixton,' said Lestrade, 'Lauriston Gardens.'



'What's new about this one?' Sherlock asked the policeman. 'You wouldn't come to get me if there wasn't something new ...'

Lestrade gave Sherlock a hopeful look. 'You know how these suicides never leave notes? Well, this one did. Will you come?'

Sherlock's mind worked fast as it took in this new information. 'Who's doing the science work at the crime scene?'

'Anderson.'

Sherlock looked annoyed. 'Anderson doesn't work well with me.'

Lestrade didn't want to take no for an answer. 'Well, he won't be your assistant.'

'But I *need* an assistant,' said Sherlock. He thought for a moment. 'OK, I'll come, but not in a police car. I'll be right behind it.'

'Thank you,' said Lestrade.

When the policeman left, a smile flashed across Sherlock's face. 'Brilliant!' he said, jumping into the air. His eyes shone with excitement. 'Yes! Four suicides and now a note! It's like Christmas!' He started towards the door, with his coat in his hand. 'John, make yourself at home – have a cup of tea. Mrs Hudson, I'll be late – I might need some food when I get back.'

'I'm your *landlady*, dear,' explained Mrs Hudson. 'It's not my job to get you dinner ...'

But Sherlock had already left the room. 'Just look at him running around,' said Mrs Hudson, turning to John. 'I can see that you're the sort who prefers *sitting down*. You rest your leg and I'll make you *that cup of tea*.'

As she started towards the flat's little kitchen, John suddenly hit the arms of his chair in anger. 'This STUPID leg!' he shouted. Noticing the look of surprise on Mrs Hudson's face, he added quickly, 'I'm so sorry. It's just that sometimes this leg is so annoying. A cup of tea would

be lovely, thank you ... '

'Just this once, dear,' said Mrs Hudson calmly, returning to the kitchen. 'As I said, I'm the landlady – it isn't my job to make you tea.'

John turned his attention to the newspaper and the story of the suicides.

'You're a doctor, right?' said a voice from the door. Sherlock was back. His brilliant blue eyes did not move from John's face.

'Yes.' John stood carefully, using his walking stick to help.

'Are you any good?' continued Sherlock.

'Very good.'

'Seen a lot of deaths?'

'Yes.'

'And quite a bit of trouble?'

'More than enough trouble for one life,' answered John.

'Want to see some more?'

John gave a sudden, unexpected smile. 'Yes!' he said quickly.

When Mrs Hudson came out with the tea, both John and Sherlock were leaving the flat.

'Sorry, Mrs Hudson,' John said. 'No time for the tea. We're going out.'

Sherlock smiled widely at his landlady. 'Four impossible suicides! There's no point in sitting at home when there's finally something fun going on!'

Mrs Hudson shook her head. 'Look how happy you are, Sherlock ... It isn't right to be so happy when people have died.'

'Who cares about what is *right*, Mrs Hudson?' said Sherlock excitedly. 'The game is on!'

* * *

A few minutes later John and Sherlock were sitting in the back of a black London taxi on their way to Brixton. It was dark now and Sherlock looked out at the brightly-lit shop windows and streetlights of London. He knew that John was watching him carefully.

'OK, you've got questions?' Sherlock said.

'Yeah, where are we going?' asked John.

'Crime scene. Next?'



'Who *are* you?' asked John. 'What do you do? I'd say that you're a private detective ... '

'But?'

'But the police don't go to private detectives.'

'I'm a different kind of detective,' said Sherlock, obviously proud of this fact. 'The only one of my kind in the world, actually – I invented the job. The police do come to me for help, when they don't know what to do in a case.'

John shook his head. 'The police don't ask for help from people who aren't professionals,' he said.

Sherlock turned to face him. 'When I met you yesterday and I said, "Afghanistan or Iraq?" you looked surprised.'

'Yes.' John nodded. 'How did you know?'

'I didn't know, I *saw*.' Sherlock spoke quickly. 'Your haircut and the way that you stand show that you're an army man. I heard the end of your conversation with Mike, so I knew that you trained together at the hospital ... clearly then you were an army doctor. You have a suntan on your face but not above the wrists – you've been abroad but not on holiday. You have a bad leg because you were injured in action. However, your limp is only bad when you walk, but you don't ask for a chair when you're standing. It's as if you've forgotten about it. That suggests that the problem, or part of it, is in your mind. That's why I said that you have a therapist.'

Sherlock paused. 'And then there's your brother ... you haven't got the money for an expensive phone like that, so it must have been a gift. But there are scratches on the side of it, as if it has been in someone's pocket with coins and keys. You wouldn't do that, so somebody else must have owned it first. Of course, it's obvious who that was.'

'The name on the back,' said John.

Sherlock nodded. 'The words *To Harry with love* had been scratched on the back of the phone. So somebody in your family gave you his old phone. Not your father – he would be too old for technology like that. A brother then ... but why did he give you a phone that had been a gift to him? He must have left the person who gave him the phone.'

John was shaking his head in disbelief. How could anybody *see* all of that?

'You're looking for a cheap flat in London,' Sherlock went on, 'but you're not asking your brother for help. That means that you don't get on with him very well.'

John looked out at the dark streets. They were in a part

of south London that he didn't know very well now.

'That ... was amazing,' he said.

'Do you think so?' said Sherlock. He sounded a bit surprised.

'Of course it was,' said John. 'It was *extraordinary*. Quite extraordinary.'

'That isn't what people usually say,' said Sherlock.

'What do people usually say?'

'They usually tell me to go away!'

* * *

John knew that they had reached the crime scene when he saw the flashing lights of several police cars. There was a line of yellow police tape around the front of the building to stop people coming in, and a police officer guarded the front door.

As Sherlock and John walked towards the crime scene, Sherlock asked, 'Did I get anything wrong?'

'It's true, Harry and I don't get on with each other,' said John. 'And Harry is getting a divorce.'

'I was right about everything!' said Sherlock, pleased with himself for guessing correctly.

'And "Harry" is short for Harriet,' said John.



Sherlock stopped. 'Your sister! Harry is your *sister*!' He shook his head, annoyed with himself for making a mistake.

But now it was time to test his skills with something more important. Inside Lauriston Gardens, the building in front of them, was the fourth dead body. It was time to learn why the police needed his help again.