



## Sherlock Holmes: The Golden Years

*Kim H. Krisco*

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Sherlock Holmes – The Golden Years

A Collection of Five Rousing Post-Retirement Adventures

Sherlock Holmes lamented, “I fear that retirement will elude me.” It surely does in this new five- story chronicle:

The saga begins with The Bonnie Bag of Bones that lead the infamous duo on a not-so-merry chase into the mythical mountains of Scotland and ultimately to the “the woman” who is tangled within a mystery that has haunted Holmes for a quarter century.

Curse of the Black Feather continues the adventure in which Holmes teams up with the Irregulars, and a gypsy matriarch, to expose a diabolical “baby-farming” enterprise. Their quest arouses a vicious adversary, Ciarán Malastier, who has Holmes struggling for his very life.

Maestro of Mysteries begins with a summons to Mycroft’s office and ends with a deadly chase in Undertown, far beneath the streets of London. Malastier escapes . . . but only into the next adventure.

The Cure that Kills sees Holmes and Watson in hot pursuit of Ciarán Malastier, racing across America, and pitting them against the largest detective organization in the world.

In the final story, The Kongo Nkis Spirit Train, Holmes and Watson travel to the Dark Continent to derail a “spirit train” that ensnares people’s spirit, and enslaves their bodies.

In the end, this historically accurate chronicle sheds new light on greatest mystery of all, Sherlock Holmes himself.

## Sherlock Holmes: The Golden Years Details

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# From Reader Review Sherlock Holmes: The Golden Years for online ebook

## John Sargent says

Very good and plausible. Well done.

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## Philip Jones says

The description on the back of this book caused me to worry that I was in for a set of tales steeped in the supernatural, but all such fears were put to rest by the first story. Eventually, all five proved to be based firmly in reality, with only a few nods at another orientation in the final tale. This collection of five novellas is one of the finest sets of Sherlockian fiction I have seen. The author has a good grasp of Nineteenth Century British politics and thought and each of the tales looks at seldom seen sides of that world. The author also plans to continue this set of tales in future.

“The Bonnie Bag of Bones” introduces Adaline Dart who is involved in the disappearance of one Godfrey Norton. The narrative progresses, bringing in more of her family, as time goes on. An explanation for the existence of the “Grey Man,” who is suspected of the murder is also presented.

In “The Curse of the Black Feather” we meet the primary villain in this series of tales, the man who wears the black feather. This mystery begins with a request by G. K. Chesterton to investigate events that occurred following the birth of an illegitimate daughter to a former servant of his. It also pits Sherlock against his brother, Mycroft and the rest of the “Intelligence” establishment.

The third novelette, “The Maestro of Mysteries” continues the investigation began in “Black Feather.” This leads into a dark underground realm in London, to the “Society of the Golden dawn” and to international complications. Part of this tale illustrates the author’s understanding of the Government of the Empire’s attitude toward the rest of the world and some of the consequences of that attitude.

“The Cure that Kills” details the hunt for the perpetrator of the previous two tales and the clash between Holmes and the Pinkerton agents hired to help his search. Among other things, it takes place mostly in Battle Creek, Michigan, for quite reasonable causes.

The final tale, “The Kongo Nkisi Spirit Train,” takes Holmes and Watson to Africa. Native magic is holding up completion of the Cape to Cairo railway and Holmes is needed to put it back on track before the coming War demands its use. Some events occur in this tale for which explanations are not provided.

These five tales are rich in details. Many historical characters are portrayed, some with no more explanation than a name. As an example, look up Irene’s son-in-law. He was born in 1893 and he died in 1988 and I’ve read at least one of his books. Many of the characters will reward further studies. While these tales do not use Dr. Watson in the same fashion as do most of the Canonical tales, they approach Doyle’s methods in many ways. Doyle used Dr. Watson for specific reasons and in particular ways in all but six of the tales. This author comes close, but is more generous to “the Good Doctor.”

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, October, 2014

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## **Jennifer says**

This book was a bit strange. It's billed as five new stories, but it's not really. It's 3 stories, an epilogue, and a spin off. The first two were very fun. If you'd asked me then I'd have rated the book a 4.5. The third story got a little heavy handed with the fan service and grew syrupy at the end. The fourth story was mostly a waste. It felt like the author was showing off how much historical research he'd done and it was for very little payoff. Don't read the fifth one. It's included solely to get the novel up to an appropriate publication length. It is 99.9% unrelated to the rest of the book. Literary whiplash.

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## **Shubhra says**

One of the better pastiches I've read... despite the teaser cover, nothing supernatural in here, which is something I really liked - with good explanations for seemingly supernatural events, the author scores genuine Holmes. Plus, there's nothing out of character for Watson, which is also a good achievement. With riveting plots, crisp dialogues and a good pace, a good read.

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## **crimethrillerhound.co.uk says**

Kim H Krisco's five new Sherlock Holmes (post-retirement) stories are a delight. They can be read as stand-alone tales but are better read in the chronologically order in which they appear.

Retired Holmes and Watson are reunited to solve an initial mystery arising from myth and bones found on the Scottish hills. This case eventually leads to Irene Adler and her daughter, and a story thread that continues to the last tale. In fact Holmes's relationship with 'The Woman' is examined more by Krisco than Conan Doyle ever did.

Holmes and Watson soon fall back to old habits and the interplay between them is natural. Watson's awe and affection for his friend comes through and there's some light interplay that will satisfy fans of the original tales.

As you might expect, dark forces are at work. The main criminal mastermind is the Moriartyesque Ciaran Malastier, one of a dangerous group of influential people on both sides of the pond whose sights and practices are set on eugenics.

The chase for the murderous Malastier takes Holmes and Watson across seas as their new adventures see them meet an array of interesting characters, some new, some familiar. Then there's the many figures from history including President Roosevelt, G K Chesterton, Emmeline Pankhurst, Harry Houdini, and even Arthur Conan Doyle who all make appearances. Having Houdini and Conan Doyle together makes sense, given their actual friendship and shared interests, but placing Holmes and his creator in the same scene was inspired.

The crimes all seem to fit a historical context that rings true. The referencing of the Titanic, the use of the Pinkerton Agency, the stay in the Astoria etc all help but it's the use of the time's turbulent politics, that

would lead to two world wars, that truly delivers.

Murder - and the serious threat of it - misdirection and mystery is afoot.

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## **Snigdha says**

### **Good ones**

Good stories with great details.. however first 4 stories do not really have a denouement. Mysteries are lukewarm. But great atmospherics.

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## **Dale says**

Age never trumps Holmes...

My thanks go out to Steve and Timi at MX Publishing for my review copy of this book. You guys are producing Sherlock Holmes for the multitude of Sherlockians worldwide!

This book contains five adventures that take place after Holmes retires to his cottage in Sussex to keep bees. The author notes that the stories are stand-alone, but in chronological order and somewhat connected as characters move from one story to another...

“The Bonnie Bag of Bones”

Ben MacDhui lies in the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland. It is the second highest mountain in all of the United Kingdom. The mountain has long been said to be haunted by a giant spectre known as “The Grey Man.”

Watson is in possession of human bones found upon Ben MacDhui by Fräulein Adaline Odinsvogel, a German lady whose address is in London. Holmes persuades Watson to return to the mountain to find the spot where Adaline found the bones. There are certain clues discovered there that Holmes believes were planted by Fräulein Odinsvogel.

This story sees the return of Irene Adler, always The Woman to Sherlock Holmes.

“The Curse of the Black Feather”

Holmes and Watson are invited by Mr. and Mrs. Dart to come to Henley-on-Thames for the Henley Regatta. Before they depart, they are visited by author GK Chesterton, who wrote the Father Brown Mysteries. Chesterton brings Holmes a mystery concerning the despicable practice of “Baby Farming.” Someone, usually a woman, will take in young children for a fee, with the stated purpose of raising them and/or adopting them. The children seldom survive a week in the baby farmer’s hands...

Chesterton's former housekeeper had dealt with such a person. The address given was in East Finchley. The advertisement was paid for by a man described as "a fine gentleman, dressed in black." The housekeeper returned to the Chestertons distraught upon her child being found dead in the Thames. Chesterton has investigated, but the upper levels of the police are discouraging investigation and Chesterton has received a threatening note in the mail with a black feather included. The black feather is the emblem of a new face of evil, the man known as Ciarán Malastier...

The Woman returns yet again and the character of the huge Gypsy herbalist Cinka is a real diamond in the rough!

#### "The Maestro of Mysteries"

Holmes and Watson are called by Mycroft to a meeting with Captain Mansfield Cumming and Captain Vernon Kell of Whitehall. The two Captains are insisting that any further pursuit of Ciarán Malastier from the proceeding story be stopped at once. They state that his involvement with the baby farming scandal is history and that they are using him for undisclosed purposes for the greater good.

The news sends Holmes into deep depression. That his country could consider such a man as his latest enemy an asset is more than he can believe. Watson turns to Irene and Adaline to keep Holmes from the cocaine bottle. Irene and Maestro Fritz Kreisler plan a musical distraction for Holmes.

But Irene finds out about the case and joins forces with Holmes yet again. By going undercover, Irene discovers that their enemy is in league with The Order of the Golden Dawn. It could cost her her life..

#### "The Cure that Kills"

Following the events of the last story, Ciarán Malastier has fled London for New York. Holmes begs Mycroft to allow him to personally pursue the black-hearted villain. Mycroft agrees to give Holmes all the help he can.

Holmes and Watson depart for New York aboard the German steamship Imperator. Also aboard are President Teddy Roosevelt and Harry Houdini. In the States, Malastier has been tracked to Battle Creek Sanatorium by the Pinkertons. Yet Malastier has plans of his own, and the treatments given to people judged insane in the early 1900's are often fatal...

#### "The Kongo Nkisi Spirit Train"

After the returning from the States, Holmes and Watson receive a letter from Adaline, who has fallen under the spell of a spiritualist group that boasts among its members Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The medium is historically famous as Margery, sometimes called The Witch of Lime Street. Margery had a very famous feud with Harry Houdini.

Leander Star Jameson has returned from South Africa with a similar tale of spiritualism. He states that native spirit-god The Kongo Nkisi has halted all progress on the Cape to Cairo Railway...

I always love it when writers put in real events and genuine characters into the world of Sherlock Holmes! The events and characters in these stories are familiar to me, as I have the curiosity that killed the proverbial cat! In my teens I read reams of data on odd and unusual events and eccentric and cunning people. Kim Krisco does an great job using these historical tidbits as building blocks in these mysteries.

I give the book five stars...

Quoth the Raven...

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### **Chitra Iyer says**

Few books have the power to transport you back to childhood. For me, any book with Sherlock Holmes in it, does the trick. I remember borrowing books from friends and reading them huddled in a corner of my bed. It was a perfect accompaniment to wintry nights. It still is.

'Sherlock Holmes: The Golden Years' is a collection of five stories or five cases if you will after our dear Holmes has retired from active crime solving. The book opens with the story 'The Bonnie Bag of Bones' where in both Holmes and Watson, solve an old mystery up in the misty hills of Scotland. 'The Curse of The Black Feather' is a story where both are approached to put an end to 'baby farming'. Holmes and Watson, with the help of a gypsy woman, help bust the operation. This story further continues in 'Maestro Of Mysteries'. Holmes is sent for by his elder brother Mycroft for a secret meeting which doesn't end too well. With the British bureaucracy on one side and Holmes and Watson on the other, this story takes both of them through the mysterious streets under London. 'The Cure That Kills' is a fast paced, adventurous case that finds Holmes and Watson dashing across America to fight a deadly detective organisation. 'The Kongo Nkis Spirit Train' is the last story in the book. Here, both travel to Africa where a 'spirit train' supposedly takes over people's spirits and enslaves them.

Firstly, what a delight to read 19th century English! Phrases like ...withr we were bound and ...with haste! are rarely read these days. It just cleanses your English palate off of the urban slangs and colloquial language that we are so used to these days. Suddenly I'm encouraged to write this way! Anyways, the language is delightful, as already stated. The pace was a little slow, especially in the beginning of 'The Curse of The Black Feather'. But no damage done as it picks up just as quickly towards the end of the story and onwards. Surely, it is a huge task to recreate Sherlock Holmes in a similar style such as Arthur Conan Doyle but, nevertheless, the book has done justice to both the maestro and his masterpiece. The author Kim H. Krisco, definitely deserves all the credit for that.

So, if you have ever wondered what Sherlock Holmes and Watson did after they retired, you have got to get this book. A curious and dynamic mind such as Holmes's cannot be idle, and these adventurous stories are proof to that.

And I would be a complete halfwit to not have recommended this book, would I not, Mr. Holmes? ;-)

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### **Darren says**

This is a book of five short stories written after Sherlock Holmes retired. I liked it a lot. It was a well written book.



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### **Chelo Diaz-Ludden says**

I must confess that this book was my first soiree into Sherlock Holmes, and an enjoyable one. The stories are cleverly interwoven deal with more than simply crime sleuthing. Here the reader will find a love story that goes beyond the grave. The book also explores the historical, political and cultural background of eugenics, Darwinism and suffragettes, all marching against the drumbeat of an approaching WW11.

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### **Janet Carroll says**

Disappointing to say the least. Structure of the book with the ending denouement is haphazard and the characters lack continuity with the Holmes literary legagacy.

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### **Jayaprakash Satyamurthy says**

An excellent addition to the apocrypha, this volume features Holmes and Watson retiring from retirement. Times have changed and Holmes often feels out of place in a world that is steadily hurtling towards the global conflicts that ripped apart the late-Victorian world that was his natural habitat. Old familiar characters are brought back in interesting, worthwhile ways and the indomitable duo extend their activities to USA and South Africa. Altogether a thrilling collection of tales, shot through with elements of adventure, tragedy, terror, heroism, brilliant detective work and a wonderful continuing friendship between Holmes and his faithful chronicler.

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### **Carson says**

The idea of a "Golden Years" Holmes collection of stories gave me an expectation of an aging Holmes pulled into cases while grappling with diminishing capabilities. This was not that story. "The Golden Years" is five Holmes-Watson adventures that take him in numerous directions connecting with a handful of folks intertwined with his past, while creating some fresh experiences for him to encounter. There are times, such as in the "Maestro of Mysteries" story where I was captivated. There were other times I felt the book could use an editor and felt it was a little more disjointed from the voice of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The way I judge Holmes fiction is how authentic it feels to the purely logical and traditional Holmes stories I read in my youth. At brief times, this one grabbed me and at far more others, it felt completely apart. In all, it was a worthwhile read. I felt Krisco's Watson felt like the old Watson; it's just that this "Golden Years" Holmes resembled less of what I love of Holmes while trying to breathe a new side into his persona. It was a worthy effort. 3 stars.

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