



Dear Mr. Holmes: Seven Holmes on the Range Mysteries

Steve Hockensmith

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Big Red and Old Red Amlingmeyer have starred in five novels, rustling up award nominations and fans aplenty as they cracked mysteries using the methods of their hero, Sherlock Holmes. How did these Old West drifters first discover Holmes, though? And how did their early, awkward stabs at "deducifying" turn out? These seven short stories provide the answers. In "Dear Mr. Holmes," Old Red first gets the itch to turn detective -- and just in time, too, because a killer's stalking him and his brother along a Kansas cattle trail. In "Gustav Amlingmeyer, Holmes of the Range," Old Red's attempt to settle down and open his own "cafay" goes haywire when one of the customers gets a side order of arsenic with his steak and potatoes. And the adventure continues in five more stories (most originally published in Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine). If you're a fan, you won't want to miss these rollicking peeks into the Amlingmeyers' past. And if you're not a fan, there's no better place to start!

Dear Mr. Holmes: Seven Holmes on the Range Mysteries Details

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From Reader Review Dear Mr. Holmes: Seven Holmes on the Range Mysteries for online ebook

Leona Grace says

Lovely, evocative writing. I thoroughly enjoyed these short stories. A delicious mix of dark humour and traditional 'western', with two very engaging characters at the heart of the tales.

Altivo Overo says

I have enjoyed the full length stories about Old Red and Big Red and their "detectiving" efforts. This collection of short stories fills in some gaps before and between the novels. All were entertaining and told in a style more reminiscent of Mark Twain than of Conan Doyle, at least in my opinion. But of course they are definitely American stories, and the American style is appropriate even though Old Red idolizes "Mr. Sherlock Holmes."

If you like Twain, or 19th century American mystery tales, or humorous western stories, these will probably please you. The narrator for the Audible edition is quite good and easy to listen to as well.

Savannah B says

Perfect little additional gems to the main series!

David says

The Description of this book on GOODREADS is wrong. These aren't HOLIDAY mystery stories. But rather, seven short mysteries featuring Old West detective Old Red and his brother, who wander about the old west attempting to apply Holmesian techniques to solving mysteries.

As with any story collection, this one is a bit uneven. Meaning that some of the stories are pretty good, have the right hooks and flavor to keep the reader reading. These were in the front of the book. It is almost as if the stories towards the end were simply filler, not nearly as interesting, not nearly as Holmesian, and therefore not nearly as good as the first few stories.

Having read the first three novels of this series, I enjoyed the first two, but the Black Dove set in Frisco was not as good, and some of the stories in this collection were lacking a bit. For example, in one story, Old Red gets Shanghaied and Big Red solves the mystery with little more than brute force. He tries to apply some Holmes logic, but quickly just goes to fisticuffs. That is indeed his character and nature, but it didn't make for a good story.

hijinx16 says

i liked all of these

Cathy says

B; I love a good cozy mystery and this was the first one I've read set in the wild west. It was a bit different, but followed the expected plot. Brothers are hired hands and mimic the cowboy version of Holmes and Watson.

Julie Davis says

"Holmes on the Range" stories are about two cow-punching brothers who read Watson's stories about Sherlock Holmes and then use similar deductive techniques to solve mysteries in the Old West. More correctly Old Red solves the mysteries a la Holmes and Big Red writes the stories up a la Watson. Author Steve Hockensmith says in the introduction that he was trying to think of a way to write Holmesian stories in an unusual way when his wife asked him to go hiking. He realized that the Old West and Victorian England were contemporaneous and the setting for these humorous mysteries was born.

I first encountered Old Red and Big Red on the Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine podcast where "Dear Dr. Watson" was episode 5. I was immediately taken by this delightful duo, their cowboy lives, and the mystery they solved. Naturally, when I saw Steve Hockensmith offering a free Kindle file for bloggers to review, I snapped it up. These stories didn't disappoint. The settings follow Old Red and Big Red through the varying fortunes typical for cowboys of that time. The mysteries were varied and interesting. Although I was able to solve a couple of them myself, that didn't detract from my enjoyment as a good portion of the stories' value is the characters and environment. There weren't many anachronisms that I could spot, although I believe that "rolling your eyes" is a modern facial expression and even if it wasn't it would have been described differently back then.

Altogether this was a delightful collection and I highly recommend it.

Amy says

I generally don't gravitate towards short stories. I prefer the longer engagement of novels. Yet I am a Hockensmith fan, and an Old Red and Big Red fan, and these stories were well worth the read. The appeal was no doubt the shared characters and themes amongst the tales, along with Hockensmith's usual humor and charm. Just plain fun.

Kay says

Got acquainted with Steve Hockensmith's books with his "Tarot" series. Since I also like westerns I decided to give this series a "look/see". I'm super glad that I did. Old Red (ripe old 27 years) and Big Red (his younger brother) meet Sherlock Holmes by reading about his adventures. This happened when the "Reds" were on a cattle drive. Since Old Red couldn't read, he left school early to support his younger brothers and sisters, Big Red read (okay, ha-ha) the stories to all the cow punchers after supper.

Old Red wasn't usually intrigued by anything, but he immediately decided he would make a good detective, and he was right.

This book is the first 7 published short stories leading up to the full length books, and I will admit I took advantage of Steve's generosity and ordered all the books at a very low price. They would be worth every penny even at a higher price point.

If you like humor, suspense and just plain "detectiving" I highly recommend this series.

PS... The Tarot series is great too, just saying....

Victor Catano says

Big Red and Old Red are Back!

I love this series, featuring the Amlingmeyer brothers - two cowpokes who stumble across Sherlock Holmes stories and use his deducifying methods to solve crimes in the old west. There hasn't been a new novel in a while, so I was glad to see this collection on Amazon. Big Red and Old Red cross paths with wolves, dentists, lake monsters, and Mormons. A rollicking round up of tales.

Clifton McLendon says

Entertaining, but not Holmesian.

These stories are interesting enough, but they cannot hold a candle to Conan Doyle's writings, not those of Craig Stephen Copland, Nicholas Meyer, or August Derleth.

Prescott says

Okay couple things.

Good selection of short stories. Some of them explain what happened to the Boys, between novels. They are not directly connected to the books, but they are all on / in a continuity.

It would have been nice to read the stories in order, but it's not necessary. There are a few spoilers in these short stories, so beware.

In order, means, a short story or two here, a novel, a short story, a novel, etc.

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I got the book in a kinda weird way. I heard Mr. Hockensmith was working on a new book in the series, so I wanted to finish the last book in the series, I haven't started it yet, and the short stories in this collection. I have access to several different library systems in the SF Bay Area, among them Alameda, Oakland, and the Alameda Free Library. None of these library systems had this book. In fact none in the State of California did. They found one in their Inter-Library Loan system from Fairbanks Alaska.

The book was originally a trade paperback, but it had been turned into a hardback by the Houchen Bindery Company, Utica Nebraska. Awesome job. No idea what it cost, but it seemed "natural" as a hardback.

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Anyhow. I've caught up on the short stories. Soon, World's Greatest Sleuth, and hopefully The Double A Western Detective Agency. The last is not listed on Goodreads yet. I hope all is well with it, and that it's coming along.

C.O. Bonham says

Any fan of Steve Hockensmith's *Holmes on the Range series* will love this collection of seven short mysteries featuring *Old Red* and *Big Red Almingmeyer*. These seven stories cover about a year in the lives of the cowboy detectives, starting before the first book *Holmes on the Range* and ending just before the fourth *The Crack in the Lens*. The author is even nice enough to point out where each of the three novels should have come in at. The obsessive reader will notice a few inconsistencies but if we detective fiction junkies can forgive Doyle his over sights surly we can forgive Hockingsmith his.

Megan says

My favorite kind of western/mysteries. This one didn't disappoint

HBalikov says

I am going to make this quick. Are you familiar with The Amlinger brothers, Big Red and Old Red? They are cowboys in the American West of the 1890s. Big Red has read Sherlock Holmes stories to his older brother who can not read and Old Red has taken them to heart. They both believe (as Arthur Conan Doyle would have hoped) that these are actual cases, not fiction. We see the brothers trying to apply Holmes' methods to their troubles.

Steve Hockensmith is very good in setting this up in his books: *Holmes on the Range*, *On the Wrong Track*, etc. He is particularly skilled at balancing the mystery and the humor that comes with these cowboys trying to emulate Holmes with varying degrees of success.

These short stories are mostly to fill in some gaps in the previous narrative. They are totally unnecessary to anyone but a fan of the series. Most aren't nearly as good as the full length novels. If you do want to while away your time with these stories, be sure to read Hockensmith's introduction. It may be the best thing about

the book.
