



“SHERLOCK”

**A Hartswood Films production
For BBC One**

Written by:

Steven Moffat, Mark Gatiss and Steve Thompson

Starring:

**Benedict Cumberbatch, Martin Freeman,
Rupert Graves, Una Stubbs
and Louise Brealey**

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Sherlock Introduction

Other detectives have cases, Sherlock has adventures

Benedict Cumberbatch (*Small Island, Starter For Ten*) and Martin Freeman (*The Office, Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*) star in **SHERLOCK**, a thrilling, fast paced update of Arthur Conan Doyle's classic detective, set in present day London.

Co-created by the hugely talented partnership of Steven Moffat (*Doctor Who, Coupling*) and Mark Gatiss (*The League of Gentlemen, Crooked House, Doctor Who*) and produced by Sue Vertue (*Coupling, The Cup*).

The three 90 minute films, written by Steven Moffat, Mark Gatiss and Steve Thompson (*Whipping It Up, Mutual Friends*) are directed by Paul McGuigan (*Lucky Number Slevin, Gangster No 1, The Acid House*) and Euros Lyn (*Doctor Who, Torchwood*).

In this unique adaptation the iconic details from Conan Doyle's original books remain. They live at the same address, are only interested in the bizarre, and somewhere out there, Moriarty is waiting for them.

Sherlock also stars Rupert Graves (*God on Trial, Midnight Man*) as Detective Inspector Lestrade, Scotland Yard's finest, largely because Sherlock allows him to take credit for his deductions, and Una Stubbs (*EastEnders, The Catherine Tate Show*) as Mrs Hudson their long suffering Housekeeper.

Steven Moffat says: "Everything that matters about Holmes and Watson is the same. Conan Doyle's stories were never about frock coats and gas light; they're about brilliant detection, dreadful villains and blood curdling crimes and frankly, to hell with the crinoline."

He continues: "Mark and I have been talking about this project for years, on long train rides to Cardiff for *Doctor Who*. Quite honestly, we'd still be talking about it if Sue Vertue of Hartwood Films hadn't sat us down for lunch and got us to work."

Mark Gatiss says: "The fact that Steven, myself and millions of others are still addicted to Conan Doyle's brilliant stories is testament to their indestructibility. They're as vital, lurid, thrilling and wonderful as they ever were. It's a dream come true to be making a new TV series. and in Benedict and Martin we have the perfect Holmes and Watson for our time."

SHERLOCK was commissioned by Jay Hunt, Controller of BBC One and Ben Stephenson, Controller of BBC Drama Commissioning. **SHERLOCK** is Executive Produced by Beryl Vertue, Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat. The BBC Executive Producer is Bethan Jones.

SHERLOCK is a Hartwood Films production for BBC Wales, co-produced with Masterpiece. Rebecca Eaton is the Executive Producer for Masterpiece.

SHERLOCK is also being simulcast on the award-winning BBC HD channel – the BBC's High Definition channel available through Freesat 108; Freeview 50; Sky 143 and Virgin 108. BBC HD offers the very best of the BBC's programming in high definition, bringing audiences the programmes they love with up to five times more detail than standard definition, and exceptionally vivid colours and crisp pictures.

Sherlock

Synopsis Episode 1 of 3

Sherlock Holmes was always a modern man. It's the world that got old.

Now he's back as he should be: edgy, contemporary, difficult – and dangerous!

John Watson: Doctor. Soldier. War hero. Fresh from military service in Afghanistan a chance encounter brings him into the world of Sherlock Holmes: Loner. Detective. Genius. The two men couldn't be more different, but Sherlock's inspired leaps of intellect coupled with John's pragmatism soon forge an unbreakable alliance.

A woman in pink lies dead in a derelict house. The fourth in a series of impossible suicides. DI Lestrade is the best Scotland Yard has got. But even he knows he can't compare to the young man who can tell a software designer by his tie, and airline pilot by his thumb. Sherlock has a unique analytical mind, earning his living and staving off boredom by solving crimes. The weirder and more baffling the better...

Across three thrilling, scary, action-packed and hugely entertaining episodes, Sherlock and John navigate a maze of cryptic clues and lethal killers to get at the truth.

The world's favourite detective has emerged from the fog. With sparkling scripts and unforgettable performances from the two leads, this is Sherlock for a new generation.

Sherlock Holmes is played by Benedict Cumberbatch, John Watson by Martin Freeman, Mrs Hudson by Una Stubbs, Inspector Lestrade by Rupert Graves, Molly Hooper by Louise Brealey and Sargeant Sally Donovan by Vinette Robinson.

An interview with Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss

Steven Moffat is a BAFTA-award winning writer whose career in television has spanned more than twenty years and produced some of Britain's best loved television dramas. Hot on the heels of the success of the newly re-launched *Dr Who*, Steven talks with his fellow BAFTA winner, co-creator and Arthur Conan Doyle fan, Mark Gatiss about their idea for a new contemporary update of **SHERLOCK**.

"We've been friends for years and were both writing individual episodes of *Dr Who*. On our many train journeys from London to Cardiff, we talked about our love for Sherlock Holmes, how brilliantly modern Arthur Conan Doyle's writing was and how someone should do a contemporary version. So we decided to do it before someone else did," says Steven.

There hasn't been a version of **SHERLOCK** on for several years and then all of a sudden you get two versions, the BBC contemporary update and Guy Ritchie's film happening at around the same time.

"We were aware the Guy Ritchie film was coming out last year," says Mark. "It's weird how these things happen; there hasn't been a Sherlock Holmes of any kind for ages and all of a sudden two come at once. We both enjoyed the Guy Ritchie film, but it's a totally different beast really."

Mark and Steven appreciate some Sherlock Holmes fans might have reservations about a contemporary update, but they are quick to ease these anxieties:

"Arthur Conan Doyle was a writer of genius and it's worth trumpeting that point," says Mark, "it's not said often enough. His short stories, particularly, are thrilling, funny, lurid, silly, strange, wonderful pieces of exciting adventure which lend themselves incredibly well to a modern setting."

Steven is also passionate about the direction that they did *not* want **SHERLOCK** to take: "Some of the adaptations treat it as if it's a Victorian period piece, making it a bit too reverent. Sherlock Holmes is not like that - it's so fast paced, it must have given the Victorians whiplash! And that's probably why Sherlock Holmes has captured audiences for so long."

With so many adaptations over the years, it's fair to say the duo have seen and been influenced by other versions of Sherlock Holmes:

"Our favourite is the Billy Wilder film, *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*," says Mark, "It's absolutely wonderful. It plays fast and loose with some of the most revered concepts but in the end it is an incredibly nuanced, moving piece of cinema. Also the famous Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce films. They seem to us to be closest to the real spirit of the Doyle stories. We wanted to capture that spirit and most importantly, it's made by people who love Sherlock Holmes."

As far as iconic roles go, you don't get more high profile than Sherlock Holmes, so how did the pair go about casting their contemporary Sherlock?

“Benedict came in and read for us and we thought, ‘*Just look at him,*’” says Steven. “He looked right, sounded right, had huge talent. He’s got an extraordinary face, amazing eyes and cheek bones, it all just comes together.”

Mark adds: “A modern take on **SHERLOCK** requires a modern look and Benedict brings that to the role. He’s in this sharp suit and a stylish overcoat which gives him a great silhouette. He was our first and only choice.”

Steven continues: “I think one of the great challenges of playing Sherlock Holmes is that so many actors have played the character, but few have made an impression. One of the critical things is to be able to play the cleverness and the deductions without seeming smug. I think Benedict has the right balance of warmth alongside an unapologetic assumption of imperiousness which is spot on.”

Benedict stars alongside Martin Freeman as Dr John Watson. Mark explains: “At the heart of the drama is the relationship between these two unlikely friends and the adventures they have, so casting a Dr Watson was equally important.”

“Benedict is playing a cold, almost alien-like man in **SHERLOCK** and John Watson is the person who humanises him, they are a unit together,” says Steven. “We’ve all grown up with these two characters, they are a joy to write, a joy to watch and a joy to be with. You get that when you find a Holmes and Watson that work so well together.”

He continues: “Sherlock Holmes is one of a kind: whilst other detectives have cases, Holmes has adventures. **SHERLOCK** isn’t a drama about police procedure; the police are involved but the cases themselves are Sherlock’s and he’s only interested in the strange ones.”

The three 90 minute films are a mix of material from the original stories and new material, says Mark. The first episode, ‘A Study In Pink’ is partly an homage to Conan Doyle’s first story to feature the fictional detective, ‘A Study In Scarlet’, written in 1887. “There are many elements of that story that we’ve taken bits and pieces of and hopefully made an entertaining adaptation.”

Character traits are important and Steven confirms that Sherlock does still play the violin. He also assures audiences that Sherlock and John meet in a similar way as they do in the original story, setting the scene for their friendship: “Dr Watson is invalided home from war in Afghanistan and is looking for affordable accommodation in London when an old mutual friend from Barts Hospital introduces them to each other.”

“London is such a character in the original stories, and London is a very exciting city at the moment; there is a real vibrancy, the architecture and design looks great and we were keen to capture some of that,” explains Mark.

The character Sherlock Holmes famously used drugs. Steven explains how that subject it tackled in the modern version:

“I think you’d have to ask the question would a man like Sherlock Holmes be a coke addict today? In Victorian times everybody was taking some kind of drug, largely because there was no such thing as a pain killer. It is a very different thing to say that Sherlock Holmes is a coke addict now.”

Mark add: "Many people point out the drug use in Sherlock Holmes, but there are more references to Sherlock Holmes laughing than there are to his taking cocaine or morphine, but oddly enough people never think about that. I understand why, but the important thing is to not get it out of context with the rest of the character."

Steven agrees: "The original books are funny; if you read the Sherlock Holmes stories, the interaction between the two main characters is always funny and I hope we've captured some element of that. Of course it's funny he's a weird genius, not an ordinary genius."

As for the villains, how do you find a good enough villain, cleverer than Sherlock Holmes who isn't going to get caught in the first 10 minutes, particularly in the modern world of forensics?

Steven is straight to the point: Sherlock Holmes isn't about the villain, it's about the mystery and going on an adventure with Holmes and Watson to solve it.

A successful writing partnership must have a technique? "One word each!" Mark jokes. In fact they write each episode on their own but they do exchange ideas and help each other out: "The first line Sherlock utters in my episode was actually a line I nicked from you," Steven admits to Mark.

The two are clearly passionate about being true to the original Sherlock but Mark also stresses that this is an interpretation: "We love **SHERLOCK** and are very confident about what we've managed to do with it. This is a sort of distillation of how we think it can be done and we hope this modernisation really sets it alight again."

Benedict Cumberbatch plays Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock Holmes, early thirties, tall and lean, is dressed plainly but neatly and has an imperious nature. He's a 'consulting detective', the only one in the world - he invented the job! When the police are out of their depth, which is often, they call Sherlock. Then he is introduced to Dr John Watson.

"The original novels reached a wide, diverse audience and many people still hold up Sherlock Holmes as the greatest detective of all time," says Benedict speaking about the prospect of playing Sherlock Holmes in this contemporary dramatisation. "He's a cultural phenomenon that has been translated into over 160 languages, it's a truly international thing."

He continues: "Whilst this 'contemporary setting' is what makes this adaptation unique, we have gone back to the original novels as our source. We're telling the story from the very beginning, from its inception. The first episode, 'A Study In Pink', replicates a lot of what happens in 'A Study In Scarlet' including one of the only times Sherlock and John's meeting has been dramatised."

Benedict speaks of the original Sherlock Holmes novels with affinity and admiration: "They're so gripping, really interesting well thought-out, beautifully drawn characters and a fantastic insight into playing very extraordinary people."

He is quick to point out that it's the talents of the co-creators Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss that will ensure audiences will be drawn in, Conan Doyle fans and newcomers alike.

“We have two people in Mark and Steven who are brilliant at their craft,” Benedict reassures Sherlock Holmes fans. “We’re not trying to be clever or convoluted, but rather have a really exciting and gripping story at its heart.”

He adds: “I’d be thrilled if part of the effect we have, is that viewers wanted to go out and read the original books - that would be fantastic.”

Playing Sherlock Holmes carries a responsibility and one that Benedict is aware of, particularly after receiving letters from fans of the Sherlock Holmes Society: “They have let me know that I have huge shoes to fill!” Even so he remains confident about playing Holmes: “I am probably the 71st Sherlock. We have a few things on our side, so as far as rendering their perfect Holmes, part of it is a blank canvas, part of it is being something totally new.”

As well as having read a number of the books, Benedict was a fan of the earlier TV and film adaptations: “I saw quite a few when I was growing up. Jeremy Brett was wonderful, he was a big influence on my childhood, but that doesn’t put me off at all, we’re moving away from a Victorian period so that gives great scope for freedom and interpretation.” He goes so far as to say that the new setting for the drama is what attracted him to the part: “I have to say it wouldn’t have appealed to me as much to play an original Holmes because, I feel, in so many ways it’s been done superlatively well by Rathbone in black and white and Jeremy Brett in colour.” The new time period and engaging writing have created a unique drama: “It’s a page turner, the first script we read was fantastic.”

Benedict explains a little of the type of action that viewers can expect: “There are some great chase scenes, the odd explosion, some kung fu sequences, a fight with a Chinese war lord. I shoot a human giant who strangles people with his bare hands and chase a taxi cab through the streets of London, so it’s definitely a rollercoaster ride.”

The dynamic between Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson is essential as Benedict explains: “It’s a team effort; I couldn’t do it without him, I need him.”

As to the close bond between Sherlock Holmes and John Watson, Benedict explains further: “In the books, Watson gets married fairly early on, so I wasn’t aware that it was an issue. However we do allude to the idea that there may be a ‘misunderstanding’ from other people who think we’re a couple! We’ve just moved into a flat-share, we might not be sure of our relationship is at one point, in the same way, when two people meet it takes a while to suss each other out.”

Benedict describes the setting of **SHERLOCK**: “London still remains at the heart of the drama, this includes using iconic locations such as Soho, China Town, Piccadilly Circus, Westminster Bridge and everything that modern London life involves, London cabs, the River Thames, traffic jams, i-Phones, computers.”

In terms of the contemporary nature of this adaptation, Sherlock is aided by technology including his very own website ‘The Science of Deduction.’

“Definitely, Sherlock’s modus operandi is aided by technology, his speciality is deducing the facts, pulling together a vast amount of information so that he can understand what he sees and experiences. He uses technology and forensic science but there is still a huge amount of human instinct needed. He still has a

capacity to make a wrong choice and that is not hidden just because technology is present. He is fallible but he completely fits in with the modern mode of policing.'

Martin Freeman plays Dr John Watson

Dr John Watson. Early thirties. He's been through hard times, seen bad things. An army doctor just invalided home from military service in Afghanistan, he's a lost soul, adrift in London, until a mutual friend introduces him to a strange young man called Sherlock...

Martin Freeman plays Dr. John Watson in the new BBC drama **Sherlock**. The drama sees Arthur Conan Doyle's famous novels brought into a contemporary setting and Martin admits that, initially, he was somewhat apprehensive about the prospect of an updated portrayal of Sherlock Holmes:

"When I heard they were updating Sherlock, I thought it might be a bit anachronistic for its own sake."

Despite his initial fears, Martin found the scripts "gripping and fantastically written" which quickly dispelled any concerns.

"I was sent the script and by about the end of the fourth page I just thought, 'this is genuinely brilliant.' It was probably the best script I'd read for ages, it's fantastically well written, regardless of when it's set."

Martin didn't read the Sherlock Holmes books growing up, but he did enjoy watching the likes of Basil Rathbone and Jeremy Brett in film and television adaptations.

On landing the role of Watson, he was keen to familiarise himself with Conan Doyle's original stories.

"I have acclimatised myself to the original books now, I really enjoyed getting to know them, also listening to the audio books on my iPod."

Although Dr John Watson has often been represented as Holmes' sometimes 'bumbling' sidekick, Martin describes a very different character from the one viewers might be used to:

"In this version, Sherlock and Dr John Watson are both evenly weighed. John is not just a side-kick, he has a really good role to play. Every actor wants to play someone three dimensional and this is as close as you get. Part of what attracted me to this version of **SHERLOCK** is the fact that, as in the original Conan Doyle stories, Watson is the story-teller. You're experiencing these adventures through Watson's eyes and through Watson's words. My character writes up all the cases in his blog just as Watson wrote the cases that formed the original books."

He continues: "I saw no reason to see him as anything other than very able. He's a military doctor, just returned from Afghanistan, he's somebody who can handle himself and makes life or death decisions on a daily basis."

In terms of the dynamic between Watson and Holmes, Martin says: "Sherlock likes the game of it, whereas John is at first horrified by how Sherlock treats a dead body as a game. Sherlock wants to be the cleverest person in the world; he's got a real ego. Sherlock is 'un-socialised' and I think John likes that about him but it also

infuriates him. I think he's flattered to be the person who Sherlock wants to hang around with though."

Martin describes Watson as "Sherlock's eyes on the world, but also the world's eyes on Sherlock: everything is filtered through John."

Sherlock Holmes is played by Benedict Cumberbatch, an actor Martin hadn't previously worked with, but one he admired nonetheless.

"I'd never met Benedict, but I'd liked his work as a viewer. Benedict looks like you'd imagine Sherlock Holmes should be and he can really act. It was very nice to watch a really good actor in the driving seat. We found working together quite easy, we seemed to gel and we kind of understand where one another is coming from. Chemistry wise it felt good."

Sherlock co-creators and writers Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat are huge fans of Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, a fact that Martin believes will bode well with fans of the original books:

"We have two genuinely fantastic writers at the helm. They also happen to be big, big 'Doyle-heads'. Clearly they love Conan Doyle, so they want to facilitate it, it's not like they are going to kick out stuff to make it a bit more hip, more *Skins* or *In-Betweeners*. They are very respectful of Conan Doyle's work, without it being dry. Steven and Mark are very good at incorporating plot and character; one isn't sacrificed for the other."

One aspect of the BBC's **SHERLOCK** that Martin particularly liked was the "intelligently-written action". Ironically, Martin was injured, not during the filming of an action scene, but coming out of his trailer:

"I was injured on day three; I slipped on the ice coming out of my trailer with a bowl of porridge and I went down like a ton of bricks and did my wrist in. I had to go to hospital and we lost a big *mission* of a scene, a massive scene. We'd already lost the second day because of a snowstorm and then this third day was basically kaput – Ben had to go and pretend that he was acting with me."

Some may question the idea of bringing Sherlock Holmes into the present day but Martin is confident the contemporary version makes total sense: "I think it really stands up. Steven's rationale was that we update Ian Fleming with Bond all the time; we're not seeing Daniel Craig in the fifties. Arthur Conan Doyle's stories are certainly rich enough to do that with."

And in terms of who he thinks will most enjoy **SHERLOCK**?

"Well, it's written by huge Conan Doyle fans who really love this stuff as well as being very enjoyable so there should be a few boxes ticked for the Doyle-nuts too!"