



A Conspiracy in Belgravia

Sherry Thomas

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The game is afoot as Charlotte Holmes returns in the atmospheric second novel in *New York Times* bestseller Sherry Thomas's Victorian-set *Lady Sherlock* series.

Being shunned by Society gives Charlotte Holmes the time and freedom to put her extraordinary powers of deduction to good use. As “Sherlock Holmes, consulting detective,” aided by the capable Mrs. Watson, she’s had great success helping with all manner of inquiries, but she’s not prepared for the new client who arrives at her Upper Baker Street office.

Lady Ingram, wife of Charlotte’s dear friend and benefactor, wants Sherlock Holmes to find her first love, who failed to show up at their annual rendezvous. Matters of loyalty and discretion aside, the case becomes even more personal for Charlotte as the missing man is none other than Myron Finch, her illegitimate half brother.

In the meanwhile, Charlotte wrestles with a surprising proposal of marriage, a mysterious stranger woos her sister Livia, and an unidentified body that surfaces where least expected. Charlotte’s investigative prowess is challenged as never before: Can she find her brother in time—or will he, too, end up as a nameless corpse somewhere in the belly of London?

A Conspiracy in Belgravia Details

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Author : Sherry Thomas

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From Reader Review A Conspiracy in Belgravia for online ebook

Laurie Anderson says

Even better than the first one!!

Alyssa says

Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog

A Conspiracy in Belgravia by Sherry Thomas

Book Two of the Lady Sherlock series

Publisher: Berkley Books

Publication Date: September 5, 2017

Rating: 4 stars

Source: eARC from NetGalley

Summary (from Goodreads):

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In the meanwhile, Charlotte wrestles with a surprising proposal of marriage, a mysterious stranger woos her sister Livia, and an unidentified body that surfaces where least expected. Charlotte’s investigative prowess is challenged as never before: Can she find her brother in time—or will he, too, end up as a nameless corpse somewhere in the belly of London?

What I Liked:

This sequel novel was incredible, quite possibly even better than A Study in Scarlet Women. I don't read nearly enough mystery fiction novels, but I'm glad I started reading this one. Clearly Sherry Thomas can write anything, and I'd enjoy it!

In this second book, Charlotte Holmes has a new set of cases that are puzzling and strange. Lady Ingram has sent a request for Sherlock Holmes, to find her childhood love, who did not meet her at their annual rendezvous. There is something peculiar about this request, and Charlotte knows it's not just the case of a

missing man - especially when Lady Ingram cites that the man is Myron Finch, Charlotte's half-brother. Throw in a dead man and some business from the previous novel, and it is clear that this is no ordinary situation. Charlotte and Mrs. Watson must find Myron Finch before any unpleasant business catches up to him - or them.

There are so many moving parts to this story, which was fantastic! Charlotte takes on several cases, and some of them intersect. The primary one is that of Lady Ingram, but there is also a woman who believes her housekeeper is trying to poison her. There is the matter of the dead man, whom Charlotte happens upon by chance, in some ways. In the end, all of these plots come together, except one. I thought it was so neat, how everything connected. As you're reading the story, you wonder about each individual case. But then as the climax draws near, it becomes obvious that many things are connected.

Thomas had me guessing about everything, right up until 98% of the book, when all is revealed. Don't get me wrong, the author drops information here and there, enough to make you think you understand what the mystery is. But the big reveal is nothing like I would have expected. I must applaud Thomas for how she set up the crime and the mystery!

Charlotte is so, so clever! I can't imagine writing such a clever character being easy! She is so perceptive and intelligent - nothing gets past her. She is so formidable when using her brain. Thomas did an amazing job of writing Charlotte.

The other characters were equally as well-developed and likable. I enjoyed reading scenes from Mrs. Watson's POV - she is a very kind and intelligent woman. Most of the book is written from Charlotte's POV, but all is from third-person, so the author had the freedom to have scenes from different characters' POVs. It was mostly Charlotte and Mrs. Watson. Mrs. Watson is a fantastic sidekick, and I liked seeing her friendship with Charlotte grow and solidify more.

Lord Ingram is a big part of this story, though he plays less of a big role as he did in the first book. His presence is always noticed, even though he is barely in the book (in terms of being in the same space as Charlotte). He is as honorable and clever as always, though of course not nearly as clever as Charlotte. He is a good man.

We also got to read from Livia's POV, and I liked that. Livia is a sweet girl, and her part of the story was fun to read. Fun, and sometimes a little wistful, but also hopeful. She has begun writing the tales of Sherlock Holmes and I think it's obvious that she loves it.

In terms of romance, there is even less of it than there was in book one, at least for Charlotte. She does get a proposal but not from who we as readers would want (that couldn't happen anyway). However, this proposal thing is dealt with by the end of the book. Fret not!

I won't say too much more, especially in terms of the mystery. Suffice it to say, Thomas has written a really good mystery that will be difficult for most readers to crack, until the end.

What I Did Not Like:

I would say the only thing I would complain about is the lack of romance. I understand why, but I want romance between Charlotte and her man! I think it'll be more possible in the next book, but still. The setup of the possible romance is so strange. But I guess it might move in a good direction in book three. Maybe? I don't know!

Would I Recommend It:

I highly recommend these books to fans of mystery novels. This is a historical fiction novel that is purely mystery-based. And if you hadn't noticed yet, it's a gender-swapped Sherlock Holmes story. It's great for adults or young adults, even though it is published under an adult imprint. I kept guessing at the mystery until the very end, which is the mark of a great mystery novel, to me!

Rating:

4 stars. I can't wait to see what is in store for Charlotte next! I do hope certain things proceed (you know what I'm talking about), but I also hope certain things are addressed and brought to light, in book three. Basically, I have a lot of expectations for book three!

I just added the cover to Goodreads! Isn't it lovely? Expanded cover below!

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❁?Rory?❁ says

Solid and enjoyable, better than the first book.

For some reason this series, although there's nothing really wrong with it, has left me strangely unmoved. I remember the excitement of waiting for the release of the next Irene Adler by Carole Nelson Douglas or the new Mary Russell by Laurie R. King and this series just doesn't make me feel the same eager anticipation. I think back fondly of Elizabeth Peter's Amelia Peabody and Sharyn McCrumb's Elizabeth MacPherson as though they were old friends. I don't feel that way about Charlotte Holmes or Mrs Watson. I want to love them but the characterizations just aren't interesting or complex enough. Sherry Thomas is a good writer but the magic is missing.

Cindy Burnett says

3.5 stars

While I enjoyed Charlotte Holmes as “Sherlock Holmes”, I did not fully love the mystery at the heart of A Conspiracy in Belgravia. It took me about 50 pages to even fully follow the story line, and I found the mystery and its resolution to be more convoluted than necessary. Charlotte Holmes and Mrs. Watson saved

the book for me; I enjoyed both characters immensely. Charlotte's love triangle was intriguing also. Thanks to Penguin First to Read for a copy of the book; all opinions are my own.

Caz says

I've given this an A+ for narration and an A for content at AudioGals.

This second book in Sherry Thomas' *Lady Sherlock* series is one of my most awaited releases of this year, and it fulfilled all my expectations. **A Conspiracy in Belgravia** picks up the day after the previous book, *A Study in Scarlet Women* concludes, and while might not be absolutely necessary to have read or listened to that in order to fully appreciate this latest instalment, I'd strongly recommend it, as one of the real delights of both books is the way the author presents and develops her characters. While we're given enough information here to work out who is who and how everyone relates to one another, it's not the same as experiencing it first hand in book one.

Please note that as this is an ongoing series, there are spoilers for the previous book in this review.

Listeners of *A Study in Scarlet Women* will know that Charlotte, having thoroughly disgraced herself, ran away from home and is now living with Mrs. John Watson, a former actress and widow of an army officer. She and Charlotte have gone into the private investigation business together; Charlotte presents herself as the sister of Sherlock Holmes, an invalid with an exceptional talent for detection who listens to his clients from his sick bed while his "sister" speaks to them from the sitting room next door. Only a very few people know that Sherlock doesn't exist, and the aim is to keep it that way.

You can read the rest of this review at **AudioGals** .

Jen (The Starry-Eyed Revue) says

I obviously loved the previous book -- I re-read it prior to starting this sequel. But I did not expect to love this second book even more. I mean, the second book is rarely as good as the first, but in this case, it is just. **So. Unbelievably. Good!** I love all of the relationships in this series -- the intrinsic ones and those with side characters that develop along the way -- and the banter and camaraderie just elevate them for me. Then you've got the mystery that ties them all together, but even the side gigs that Charlotte takes on are equally as intriguing. But I think the thing that sealed this installment as my favorite of all of Sherry Thomas' novels thus far was that ending. I was utterly speechless...and then I was screeching. And I already want to read it again.

Obsidian says

Wow. I really enjoyed the first book and the second one was a disappointment compared to that. I think Thomas tried to bite off more than could be reasonably followed in this book. Maybe some of it could have been pushed to a third book. Having Charlotte Holmes and Mrs. Watson taking on cases, having Charlotte solving ciphers for Lord Bancroft, and the follow-up to Moriarty and the half-brother we heard about in the

last book all thrown together didn't make for an engaging read. Don't even get me started on Inspector Treadles and his nonsense about women. The man goes around ticked that the brilliant Sherlock Holmes is Charlotte Holmes. And then is even more unhappy when his wife admits she wishes she could run her father's business.

After the events in book #1, Charlotte and Mrs. Watson are still doing their detective business as Sherlock Holmes. However, things become awkward when Lord Ingram's wife comes asking for help in finding her first love. There's a lot of hand-waving away why Charlotte agrees to work on this case, but ultimately that case leads to a larger mystery that I didn't think was put together very well.

Charlotte is still quite good at deducting. But you do read a lot about what she eats, her tea, and how hungry she is at all times. Why Thomas switched Holmes addiction to Charlotte being an over-eater or glutton (I honestly don't know what she is doing with this) is baffling to me. She could have her addicted to something else and or just not at all. Since you already set up that Sherlock Holmes is not real, and that Charlotte's sister Olivia is going to write stories about the man, who cares that you try to mirror every little thing in those stories.

I can't really get a handle on the other characters. Mrs. Watson barely felt in this one. We do have her teaching Charlotte about self defense which I liked.

Olivia Holmes is in and out of this one. She's not really integral to the plot, but having her get romantic notions about someone that may be in danger made me just sigh. I am guessing based on how this book ends, he will pop up in the third book.

Lord Ingram and Charlotte...I don't know. Due to the events in this book one wonders what will happen next. I actually liked the idea of Charlotte getting married to Lord Bancroft (have fun reading about what happens next). At least it would have moved the book to a different place than I think most readers would have expected.

The writing didn't grab me like in the first one and the flow was not good. The only parts I found interesting were getting Charlotte's and Mrs. Watson's POV. I would recommend Thomas cut down on the back and forths to Inspector Treadles in the next one. She could have left him out entirely and nothing would have been missed since he ends up just being a minor player in this. I think we only see him since he will have a larger role in book #3.

The ending felt vaguely unsatisfactory since you have a lot of revelations that didn't quite make sense to me at all. I even re-read some of the sections again and just gave up. I think books like these have to leave clues that readers can pick up on as well. Otherwise it's not really fun to read. You just have the author throwing out twists.

Caz says

I've given this an A at AAR

Reviewing mysteries is always a challenge as anyone who's tried it will know. And with one of this calibre,

it's even more difficult, because I want to tell you just how GOOD this book is, but I can't tell you too much for fear of giving too much away and spoiling your enjoyment. I could just say a) "Sherry Thomas is a genius – go buy this book!", or b) "Don't waste time here - go buy this book!", but that isn't much of a review, so I will attempt – somehow – to do justice to this terrific story and author... and will no doubt fail miserably, at which juncture you should simply heed the advice given in points a) and b).

Note: I think it would be possible to enjoy this as a standalone, but I really would recommend reading A Study in Scarlet Women first. There are spoilers for that book in this review.

A Conspiracy in Belgravia picks up on the day after the events that concluded the previous book. Charlotte Holmes, ably assisted by her closest friend, Lord Ingram Ashburton, and Inspector Treadles of Scotland Yard, has solved the Sackville murder case and learned of the existence of an infamous criminal mastermind by the name of Moriarty. In addition, Charlotte worked out that that Lord Ingram – Ash to his friends – had pulled strings behind the scenes in order to make sure she wasn't left alone on the streets after she ran from her father's house, and orchestrated her meeting with the army widow and former actress with whom Charlotte now resides, Mrs. John Watson. Charlotte doesn't like being beholden to Ash, especially not as their friendship, while generally strong, has been sometimes strained since his ill-advised marriage six years earlier.

Charlotte and Mrs. Watson have formed a working partnership as investigators, using the identity of Sherlock Holmes as a front for their operation. Holmes suffers from a debilitating illness, so clients meet with his 'sister' – Charlotte – while the detective listens to the conversation from the next room. It's with some surprise that Charlotte identifies their latest prospective client, Mrs. Finch, as Lady Ingram, Ash's wife. Mrs. Watson is concerned about accepting the lady as a client given their friendship with her husband, but Charlotte believes her need must be very pressing if it has driven her to seek Holmes' help, and agrees to the meeting – although as Charlotte cannot afford to be recognised, the part of Sherlock's sister will be taken by Mrs. Watson's niece, Penelope Redmayne. 'Mrs. Finch' explains that she is seeking information regarding the man she fell in love with before she married Lord Ingram, a young man deemed unsuitable by her parents, whose financial situation demanded she marry someone wealthy.

While she and her erstwhile love agreed not to meet or write to each other once she was married, they planned a yearly assignation – on the Sunday before his birthday, they would both take a walk past the Albert Memorial at 3 pm, so they could each see that the other was alive and well. This year, however, her sweetheart did not keep the appointment, and she wants Sherlock Holmes to find out why. Penelope asks Lady Ingram for as many details as she can provide, but when she identifies the man in question as Myron Finch, Charlotte is stunned. Myron Finch is her illegitimate half-brother.

While Charlotte and Mrs. Watson set about looking into the disappearance of Mr. Finch, Charlotte is also mulling over the proposal of marriage she has received – the second one, in fact – from Lord Bancroft Ashburton, Lord Ingram's older brother. Charlotte is fully cognizant of the benefits marriage to him would bring. It would rehabilitate her – to an extent – in the eyes of society and would soften her father's stance towards her; she could care for her sister, Bernadette (who has some sort of mental disability) and could openly spend time with her other sister, Livia and generally return to the life to which she had been born. But even though Bancroft recognises and respects Charlotte's keen intellect, he clearly expects her to discontinue her investigations as Sherlock Holmes, and she's not sure that's something she's willing to give up.

As an inducement, Bancroft gifts Charlotte with a set of puzzles, which includes a message encoded using a Vignère cipher, a fiendishly difficult code that takes Charlotte some days to decipher. Once decoded, the message leads her to an address in Hounslow, North West of London, where she and Lord Ingram

unexpectedly encounter Inspector Treadles. A man has been murdered – and appears to have named his killer before he died. Could he perhaps be the missing Mr. Finch? Or could he somehow be tied to Finch's disappearance? Or, worse still, are Finch and the murder victim somehow tied to the mysterious Moriarty, a name which seems to inspire fear in those who know it, and someone of whom even the unflappable Bancroft seems to be wary?

Well... I'm not saying. As is clear, though, there's a lot going on in this book, and I admit that I sometimes had to refer to the numerous highlights I'd made on my Kindle to refresh my memory about something, but for the most part, the story rattles along famously as Sherry Thomas skillfully pulls the disparate mystery threads together and then unravels them, bringing events to a climax I most certainly didn't see coming. Just as impressive as her plotting is the way in which she continues to explore and develop her characters and the relationships between them, building on what we know of them from the previous book and rounding them out even more. We don't see as much of Treadles in this story, but it's clear that he's been upset by the discovery of the deceit practiced by his good friend Lord Ingram (over Holmes' true identity) and isn't sure what to make of Charlotte any longer. There's a romance in the offing for Livia, who is charmed by a mysterious young man who seems to see and appreciate her for who she is and doesn't talk down to her or dismiss her interests; and we get to know a little more of the circumstances which led to Ash's marriage to a society beauty he later learned had married him only for his money.

Anyone with any knowledge of this author's work will already know that her work is highly creative and imaginative; she fashions strong, well-developed and engaging characters, crafts complex interweaving plots, and her historical romances are among the best in the genre. I should, however, warn anyone hoping for romantic developments between Charlotte and Ash that things between them don't progress a great deal (if at all). The author sheds more light on Ash's feelings towards Charlotte, showing he knows her better than anyone (and there's a nice touch at the end where Charlotte both acknowledges this and admits she's glad it's Ash who knows her so well) and Charlotte... well, she doesn't necessarily wish Ash had married her, she would just prefer he hadn't married at all. She's someone who relies on observation and logic and doesn't have room for sentiment; yet in the face of all the logical reasons she should marry Bancroft, a small part of her can't ignore the fact that she doesn't find him attractive while his brother... is a different matter entirely.

There's so much more to **A Conspiracy in Belgravia** than I can possibly say here. The characters, the relationships, the mystery ... all are richly detailed and superbly constructed, making this a truly compelling, un-put-downable read. I stand by my original points a) and b). Just go and buy it.

Veronique says

4.5*

"To be thought of as the perfect woman for a man isn't a compliment to a woman, it's more about how a man sees himself—and what he needs."

It turns out that I'm really enjoying these Lady Sherlock stories! Thomas has created a singular version of the famous detective - not only a woman, but one that keeps surprising me - and this is not just due to her surprising love of food and taste in clothes! Add to this a powerful cast where women shine in a plethora of roles, and you get a novel that I couldn't stop reading.

Once more we have several narrators, not just Charlotte, but also her sister, Mrs Watson, etc. All add disparate elements that combine into an image of Victorian society, warts and all. The plot seems more straightforward than the first instalment, but don't be fooled. If you pay attention, you may get an inkling of where you are being led to, although some details are hidden from the reader, or rather not divulged in their entirety. I don't mind. Ultimately, yes, the mystery is compelling, but the strength of these novels are in the characters, what motivates them, and how they behave.

Sherry Thomas has my undivided attention, hook, line and sinker :O)

Christina ~ Brunette Reader says

Clever, devious and highly engaging sequel to *A Study in Scarlet Women* and picking the story up right after that one ended.

It would be impossible to discuss the plot without giving away too much of both book 1 and book 2, so I will only say that things get ever more tangled, layered and interesting and the unique female Sherlock spin Ms. Thomas offers on the original version staples is ever more convincing. And it is "technically" possible to read *A Conspiracy in Belgravia* without having read the first book, but that would mean losing a substantial part of the main characters' arcs. Intelligent, deep and nuanced main characters.

The romance is relegated to the background here as well, but it crackles off the page whenever present, while the mystery aspect gains ingenuity and guile. The writing is brilliant and polished, as always with this author, with a quicker pace but at the same time evocative of the classic Victorian suspense novel.

An amazing series, can't wait for the next one.

Lady Wesley says

I am breathless. Not to mention sleepless, as I had to stay up late to finish this amazing book. Sherry Thomas is simply a genius – twisting classic Sherlockian memes into complicated knots and then gradually untying them so that we're left with a beautiful seamless ribbon of an adventure tinged with romance. *A Conspiracy in Belgravia* is most definitely going on my "playing chess not checkers" shelf.

This is the second Lady Sherlock book, and as we learned in the first, Miss Charlotte Holmes has set herself up as the supposed sister of an invalid brother, Sherlock, who is brilliant at solving baffling mysteries and who occasionally assists Inspector Treadles of Scotland Yard. Charlotte is estranged from her aristocratic parents and lives with Mrs. John Watson, the colorful widow of an Army officer. Together, they maintain the facade of an ailing Sherlock living at 221B Baker Street. Charlotte interviews the clients while 'Sherlock' listens from his bedchamber. Only a few people know that Sherlock does not exist, including Charlotte's sister Livia, Inspector Treadles, and Lord Ingram Ashburton – Ash – Charlotte's closest friend since childhood.

Shortly before our story begins, Charlotte had helped expose a triple murderer, and here I must offer a suggestion: read *A Study In Scarlet Women* first. While this book could be read as a standalone, I think that a reader's understanding and enjoyment would be enhanced by reading them in order.

Charlotte receives a note requesting an appointment from a Mrs. Finch, but Charlotte immediately recognizes the notepaper and realizes that the letter comes from Lady Ingram Ashburton. The situation is rather tricky, as Ash and his wife are not a happy couple, living virtually separate lives under the same roof for the sake of propriety and their two young children. Moreover, Ash and Charlotte are secretly in love with one another, although they would never admit it or act upon it. Ash is too honorable, and Charlotte is too unromantic to think of love. There is a palpable undercurrent of attraction though.

Charlotte accepts Lady Ingram's request, but to avoid being recognized by her, Mrs. Watson's niece Penelope poses as Sherlock's sister. It turns out that Lady Ingram is looking for help in locating a young man, Myron Finch, with whom she fell in love before marrying Ash. For financial and social reasons, they could not marry but they agreed to meet once a year at the Albert Memorial, not speaking or acknowledging one another but merely passing to see that each was still alive and well. This year, however, Mr. Finch did not appear, and Lady Ingram wants Holmes to locate him and discover the reason. Imagine Charlotte's surprise when Penelope repeats this story to her, for Myron Finch is Charlotte's illegitimate half-brother, a son her father had supported but kept a secret from his wife and daughters. (Charlotte knows about him because she and Livia routinely snooped in their father's office when he was out of town.)

Charlotte is in for another surprise that day, when Ash's older brother, Lord Bancroft Ashburton, pays her a call and proposes marriage. (For you Sherlockians, Bancroft is a Mycroft Holmes sort of character who holds a position in the government and can pull strings when needed.) Bancroft is the opposite of his brother Ash – cerebral, decidedly uncharismatic, and obsessively curious about everything and everyone. Charlotte agrees to consider his proposal, as it does present some advantages for her. Marriage to Bancroft would redeem her reputation in society, which was ruined when she ran away from home after being deliberately caught in flagrante with a married man. It would enable a reconciliation with her family and enable her to offer care for her mentally disabled sister Bernadette and to visit openly with Livia. However, she would be required to give up her Sherlock Holmes persona and distance herself from the socially unsuitable Mrs. Holmes. Bancroft offers her a consolation, though: "given that mental exertion gives you pleasure, I shall be happy to supply the necessary exercises. After all, I come across them on a regular basis." With that, he gives her a dossier of six envelopes containing the details of unsolved mysteries. One of them involves breaking a virtually impossible cipher, but Charlotte is up to the job, which leads her and Ash to a London house where Inspector Treadles is investigating a murder.

Of course, I cannot resist saying that from there, the game is afoot. It is far too complicated to even begin to describe how this murder ties into the search for Myron Finch, but it does. In the incredibly skillful hands of Sherry Thomas though, the intricate plot works and everything falls into place at the end. Not only is the adventure marvelously structured, the characters are fascinating. Charlotte is logical and unromantic, and yet she hesitates to marry Bancroft given that she finds his brother more attractive. We feel great sympathy for Ash, trapped as he is in a miserable marriage to a deceitful woman who only married him for his money. Little sister Livia meets a mysterious young man who seems to like her despite her oddities and quirks. We also learn more about the tribulations of Inspector Treadles, a man happily married to an heiress but living on a detective's income. He has women problems. His wife admits that she would like to run her father's business, and the "magnificent boon to his career," Sherlock Holmes, "turned out to be a woman with loose morals and no remorse."

Once again, Thomas inserts little factoids from Conan Doyle's Sherlock stories. Livia is finding her inner muse and begins writing her own mystery story about a massacre in Utah related to a religious cult. (Sherlockians will immediately recognize elements of *A Study in Scarlet*.) And the arch-criminal Moriarty makes his presence known.

I read this on my Kindle, making lots of notes and highlights and flipping back to read some passages again. It is not an effortless read, even for someone who loves complex mysteries. But the effort is well worth it. Sherry Thomas is superbly talented, and it shows in every page of this book. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

One more thing. Just when you think you have it all figured out – there is the last line of the book. Wow! I did not see that coming. Can't wait for the next one.

Giedre says

A Conspiracy in Belgravia, the second book in Sherry Thomas's *Lady Sherlock* series, picks up almost exactly where the first book left off. And what can I say, Sherry Thomas does a great job at building upon the foundation she laid out in the first book. If you enjoyed *A Study in Scarlet Women*, then you will definitely enjoy this one too. That said, for those who haven't read the first one, this is not the right book to enter the tale. If you find yourself curious about a different spin on the Sherlock Holmes mythos, start at the beginning and have fun.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

I totally love this book. Charlotte Holmes is such a fabulous character and I enjoyed the book so much that not even half-way through did I order the first book in the series. I had no problem whatsoever getting into this book. However, I'm deeply curious to learn more about Charlotte's past transgressions that made her being shunned by her family and society. And, most of all I want to know more about her "creating" Sherlock Holmes. And, the case she was involved in the first book.

The story starts off interesting with Charlotte being contacted by Lady Ingram to find her first love. This case becomes very "personal" since Lady Ingram, of course, is the wife of Charlotte's dear friend Lord Ingram. A man that she, well, Charlotte may be very analytic, but if there is one man for her, would that be Ash Ingram. So, yes, very personal case. Still, Charlotte being Charlotte doesn't mean that she will let her emotion's rule the case. Not even when it's revealed that it's her own half-brother the Lady is looking for. Then, we have the proposal from Lord Ingram's brother Bancroft (Made me think of Mycroft, of course, lol) that Charlotte ponders over during the book. I found the case interesting, and yes I was surprised by the ending.

Now Charlotte, of course, like Sherlock Holmes has a weakness and if he needed the seven-per-cent solution is Charlotte's more the seven cookie solution. Yes, she needs cookies, not cocaine. Love that.

This is a book that surprised me. I did not expect to love it as much as I did. I love reading Sherlock Holmes pastiches and this is beside the Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes series by Laurie R. King my favorite so far. And, I have only read one book.

I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through Edelweiss for an honest review!

Lyuda says

When I started the series, I was apprehensive of how successful my favorite HR writer is going to be navigating the uncharted territories of historical mystery. My fears were put to rest as I loved the first installment and this one even a tad better.

The story picks up right after book one ends. And rather than describing the plot which would be difficult to do without spoilers, I want to share what I felt navigating the story.

The best analogy I can come up with is viewing a painting by an Impressionist. At the beginning, if staying too close to the painting, all you see is small "broken" vivid brush strokes of oil paint. They appear to be randomly selected, unorganized, going in different directions, and in no way related to each other. Take a few steps back, and your eyes will have to adjust to its blurriness, you start to see the purpose of these strokes. They start making sense. Take more steps back and you reach the perfect end distance where it all comes together and you can truly appreciate the shimmering effect of these not-so-random strokes, marvel at the whole picture they present and you want to see more. That's exactly the experiences I had while reading the story.

And the best part of the story? Miss Charlotte Homes herself, of course! Oh, if I can hug a fictional character, I would hug her. Although, on the second thought, since she would prefer not to be touched, I would bake a delicious pastry to satisfy her ever-present sweet tooth. The pastry would be light enough so she wouldn't have to worry about reaching the "maximum number of tolerable chins".

Charlotte's superb mental abilities and lack of emotional empathy to other are the most fascinating aspects of her character.

It seems there is a proliferation of stories with female detective set in Regency or Victorian times. These women are smart, capable and...too anachronistic of the times. Not Charlotte. In Charlotte's characterization, Sherry Thomas's talent shines through. Charlotte has a brilliant mind, amazing ability of deduction. She solves almost impossible problems, able to connect what appears to be random things and events and does it better than any man around her but is able to do all of this within the boundaries of Victorian England female and not just any Victorian female but unmarried and socially ruined one...The author didn't just insert Charlotte into Sherlock's area of expertise, she made a character completely different from the well-known man. Charlotte has to be creative in her investigation in order to preserve the illusion of Sherlock Holmes to the man on the street and the police.

And although the mystery is solved at the end, there is so much of family and relationship dynamic left to explore. Can't wait for the next installment!

Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

It was so much fun diving back into the atmospheric and mysterious Victorian London world that Thomas has created in her Lady Sherlock series. Once again Charlotte and her friends were a treat to see and conspire with. As a mystery always rich in detail and curiosity slowly unfolds as Charlotte puts her deductive talents into play and figures it all out before anyone else and before the danger becomes too great to those she knows and loves. And she does it all while trying to keep it a secret as much as possible from those who

don't know that the famous Sherlock Holmes, is none other than Charlotte herself.

Set in a time and place that women were suppose to be almost anything other than clever and ambitious, I love that Charlotte doesn't turn away from the challenge to shock those around her and stand tall and true to who she is with little thought to what society will think about it.

This book, this series, has some of the most romantic lines that never were. Lines that are thought but never spoken out loud. Truly swoon worthy and in large part other than the whole this book rocks all by itself already thing, it is one of the main reasons I keep coming back time and again to Ms. Thomas' writing. It is just so well written and so beautiful in both mystery and prose and the tragic love story that might never be.

I devoured this in a night and was sad that I didn't take longer with it. I wanted to both savor and eat it up. I sincerely hope the next book will be here before I know it. I just can't get enough of this series, rich with a mystery that keeps me on my toes and characters that are every bit as fun and intriguing as the story line itself.

ARC was provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.
