



## Sherlock Holmes: The Spirit Box

*George Mann*

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## **Sherlock Holmes: The Spirit Box** George Mann

Summer, 1915. As Zeppelins rain death upon the rooftops of London, eminent members of society begin to behave erratically: a Member of Parliament throws himself naked into the Thames after giving a pro-German speech to the House; a senior military advisor suggests surrender before feeding himself to a tiger at London Zoo; a famed suffragette suddenly renounces the women's liberation movement and throws herself under a train.

In desperation, an aged Mycroft Holmes sends to Sussex for the help of his brother, Sherlock.

## **Sherlock Holmes: The Spirit Box Details**

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Author : George Mann

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## From Reader Review Sherlock Holmes: The Spirit Box for online ebook

### Eukaryote says

[not a paranormal tale at all. (hide spoiler)]

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### Nancy Newton says

Not as true to the Canon as I would like. Good plot which dabbles in the occult.

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### Shawn Manning says

A fairly decent read that avoids the trap that most post-Doyle Holmes stories do; have Hoimes running around to and fro without really accomplishing anything.

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### Andrea Elkins says

I suppose I've been spoiled by the many superb PBS adaptations of the Holmes stories, but this book seemed too glossy and superficial. I can't pinpoint a specific flaw, but my attention frequently wandered and my eyes would slip to the facing page, skipping ahead. The mystery itself also was not very difficult to solve, tho the evidence was sketchy.

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### Fred Hughes says

Another great story in the new Sherlock Holmes series.

In this story we find Sherlock and Watson pulled out of retirement to work on a case at the highest levels of government. Of course Sherlock's brother Mycroft is at the rot of this new assignment.

In an alternate time line the German bombing of London is slowly dissolving the resolve of the residents of the City and the Country and it's up to Sherlock and Watson to determine what is really going on.

What is the mysterious "Spirit Box" ?

Will the German spies get to it before Sherlock ?

What is Mycroft actually after ?

A great read

## Margaret says

Very nice Sherlock Holmes pastiche, which is set in George Mann's Newbury and Hobbes universe.

It is 1915 and England is at war with Germany. Zeppelins are bombing London and a miasma of fear and misery sits over the city.

Mycroft Holmes is concerned about a spate of unusual suicides and summons his brother up from Sussex and Dr Watson from his home in Ealing.

Reunited, the two men take on a case that leaves the fate of England in their hands.

Are they up to the challenge?

Of course they are!

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## Jasper says

originally posted at: <http://thebookplank.blogspot.com/2014...>

Back in 2011 Titan Books launched their own Sherlock Holmes series with *The Breath of God* by Guy Adams, the series quickly picked up pace and now a few years later already 6 books have been published. The series so far has featured two books by Guy Adams, two books by James Lovegrove and now also two by George Mann. My first encounter with George Mann's writing was with *The Casebook of Newbury and Hobbes* and later with *Will of the Dead* (the fourth book in this series). Having read several authors all writing in the Sherlock universe I have to say that George Mann also did a terrific job with showing this enigmatic detective duo, he even takes the Sherlock universe those steps further by integrating it with his own devised detective duo Newbury and Hobbes, their stories run parallel to the that of Sherlock and Watson. And it happens to be so in *The Spirit Box*.

So far all the Sherlock books that I have read have featured in the proposed time frame of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. George Mann takes the story of *The Spirit Box* into a new era, 1915. Sherlock Holmes has retired to the quiet country side of Sussex leaving the busy streets of London and his Baker Street residence behind. In his retirement Sherlock picked up a perhaps unlikely new career, that of keeping bees. Watson still lives in London but with a growing fear. He has evacuated his wife to the countryside, London faces an ever mounting threat with the first World War, zeppelins are bombing parts of London and it isn't a safe place to live any longer. Watson is not only in grief for missing his wife but also a different family member, one of his favorite nephews has become a casualty in the war trenches of the first World War. The hardest part for Watson is that he has to go through it all alone and this becomes very notable from the start, he is depressed, mourning everything, even missing the "old" times with his friend Sherlock. All of this is about to change when Sherlock's brother Mycroft comes with a new task for our investigative duo. A bunch of unexplainable suicides have been occurring, all without any reason, the persons involved were wealthy and well known and important persons. This is just the case that both re-unite Sherlock and Watson and rekindle their investigative desires.

Early on in the investigation they stumble upon the vague references of the Spirit Box, but they do not find

out just what this box exactly does. Later on when Sherlock and Watson get deeper into their investigation they learn that the Spirit Box is an apparatus that captures the persons soul on camera... This definitely added a supernatural element to the storyline, more in the lines of George Mann's Newbury and Hobbes stories. And didn't I mention that The Spirit Box is a crossover? Sherlock Holmes requires the attention of Maurice Newbury. Sherlock might be one of the smartest person alive but when it comes to dealing with the occult there is no one better then Maurice Newbury. So the game is once again afoot but not with Sherlock and Watson but with Sherlock, Watson and Newbury.

I really liked the premise of the story that George Mann introduced, I know him from his supernatural stories with Newbury and Hobbes and don't get me wrong I really enjoyed those but what he does with The Spirit Box is quite different, yes there is still a supernatural element to the story but in the end it goes towards quite a thrilling sort of element. In the earlier books of this Sherlock series we have seen some "weird" stories with the vivisection of Guy Adams in The Army of Dr. Moreau and a heavy steampunk elements with the stories of James Lovegrove The Stuff of Nightmare and again don't get me wrong I am a huge fan of these kind of things but George Mann really takes Sherlock back to the elementary parts of him being a detective.

Another element that rings true is the imminent threat of the Germans and the troubles of the First World War. George Mann brings this readily to the forefront instead of just having it mentioned on the blurb and letting it simmer in the background. The way that the story is written clearly produces a vision that the times wherein The Spirit Box takes place are far from happy, it is a harsh time and it is far from safe. The best thing of the book is how interconnected the story is , the First World War and how it is cleverly connected with the plot line. This causes that The Spirit Box is far from your ordinary Sherlock story. George Mann really knows how to execute a smart and clever story.

In writing his story George Mann sticks closely to how Sherlock and Watson were shown in the original story of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, but he does exert his own influence on them. The story if told from the perspective of Watson and in the beginning of the book I really liked the personal emphasis on Watson's character, normally the story focuses more on Sherlock and the case itself, but giving that more of a glimpse in Watson personal experience was really great to see.

The Spirit Box is a solid addition to the growing Sherlock fiction, with it George Mann has definitely brought his A game. I enjoyed Will of the Dead but The Spirit Box is really a powerful show of both an occult investigation and a very dire and real threat to the British empire. If The Spirit Box is any indication of what else will be in store for the continuation of this Sherlock Holmes series you can surely count me in for many more books. Added to this is that George Mann has take Sherlock out of retirement and taken him beyond the story arc of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle... I am very curious to see just how the story will unfold...

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## Victor Gentile says

George Mann in his book, "Sherlock Holmes: The Spirit Box" a Book in the Encounters of Sherlock Holmes series published by Titan Books brings us a new adventure featuring Sherlock Holmes.

From the Back Cover: Souls In Torment

German Zeppelins rain down death and destruction on London, and Dr. Watson is grieving for his nephew, killed on the fields of France.

A cryptic summons from Mycroft Holmes reunites Watson with his one-time companion, as Sherlock comes out of retirement, tasked with solving three unexplained deaths. A Member of Parliament throws himself naked into the Thames after giving a pro-German speech to the House; a senior military advisor suggests surrender before feeding himself to a tiger at London Zoo; a famed suffragette suddenly renounces the women's liberation movement and throws herself under a train. Are these apparent suicides something more sinister, something to do with the mysterious Spirit Box? Their investigation leads them to Ravensthorpe House, and the curious Seaton Underwood, a man whose spectrographs are said to capture men's souls.

This is typical Holmes. Socially prominent wealthy individuals are seemingly committing suicide after doing or saying something against what they seem to believe in. Mycroft calls Holmes and Watson out of retirement to investigate. Mr. Mann has placed this story towards the end of Holmes's career. Both he and Watson have aged and now the duo have to deal with the danger of war. Does this mean that the pair are not up to the task? Never. Holmes is in for a quite a challenge as he has to solve more than one murder and prevent more from happening. On top of all this Mr. Mann has added the supernatural element of the Spirit Box. This is an intriguing, well plotted and fast paced mystery that goes along at a roller-coaster pace. Mr. Mann has given us a page turning thriller that will not disappoint any Sherlock Holmes fan. "Sherlock Holmes: The Spirit Box" is great fun. Let me assure you if you like Sherlock Holmes then you are going to really enjoy this.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Titan Books. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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### **Dolores says**

For me, this mystery ended suddenly, leaving me thinking, "that's it?" I've read a lot of Sherlock Holmes over the years and this one was disappointing.

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### **Betsy says**

Normally I am not a big fan of Sherlock Holmes stories written by someone other than Conan Doyle. This book is an exception. Except for what seemed like too much smiling on Holmes part the book stayed fairly close to the original in spirit. There were occasional lapses into modern phrases ("Where's the fun in that?") but they were forgivable over all.

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### **Lucy says**

Another enjoyable Sherlock Holmes book by George Mann! I love the style of Mann's books, it fits very well with Watson's style while still being engaging and compelling. This book is set in an alternate Britain but WWI rages on even so. I love how this book was firmly set in WWI in London, with the bombing raging on and morale being low, as well as receiving news of deaths overseas (this book opens with Watson talking about his nephew dying at the front), while the mystery continued on. The time and setting was integrated nicely, as well as showing that Holmes and Watson, while still being brilliant, are not young men anymore and so aren't able to fight foes like they would have done in Doyle's books. I liked how this was all going on

in the background while never taking the focus away from the mystery.

I found the mystery really fascinating and I loved the climax of the whole book. I was thinking that it was very out of character for (view spoiler) but Mann was two steps ahead and I like how it was all resolved, feeling very IC for all of the Holmes characters.

These books definitely spike my interest in Mann's other novels. Four stars!

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## **Melissa says**

See my other reviews at [Never Enough Books](#)

It is the summer of 1915. As zeppelins rain fire upon the people of London, some of the more eminent members of society begin to show erratic behavior.

A famed suffragette suddenly denounces the women's movement and just as suddenly throws herself beneath a passing train.

A senior military adviser speaks of surrender before jumping among the tigers at the London Zoo.

A member of Parliament gives a pro-German speech to other members of the House and later that day is found drowned in the Thames.

Desperate for some kind of answer, Mycroft Holmes reaches out to his younger brother – the now retired but still famed detective, Sherlock Holmes.

George Mann returns again with another page turning novel set in the ever familiar Sherlock Holmes universe. This particular tale is set during World War 1, some twenty years after Holmes' and Watson's heyday. Both men have retired; to Sussex and to the London suburbs, respectively. Yet when each hears the siren's call of a new case, age is but a number and neither man can resist.

Astute readers will notice how age has changed both Holmes and Watson, almost reversing some of their traits. In *The Spirit Box*, Holmes has softened a bit in his mannerisms though certainly not in his detective skills or his wit. On the other hand, Watson has become a bit crotchety – something he admits himself! Time, and the knowledge that comes with it, can change a man and even great minds like Holmes and Watson are not immune.

Mann has done a quite successful job in adding to the Holmes "library" with this particular tale. While not completely reminiscent of Doyle's original stories, it does have a similar literary flavor. It is also a crossover or sorts; introducing the reader to Sir Maurice Newbury – another character from another series Mann has penned. Newbury's role is important and is also enough to possibly whet the appetite of the reader and cause them to seek out this other series.

I loved reading *The Spirit Box*. I certainly don't need to tell any one here how I eagerly seek out new stories with this fictional detective, and while I am sometimes disappointed, books like this more than make up for it. In my opinion.

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## Patricia Gulley says

Aged Holmes and Watson during WW1. Good story, but filled with action interrupted by long descriptions of rooms, hallways, clothes and scenery.

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## Sandra says

George Mann is the author of Newbury and Hobbes and a popular steampunk author as well as someone who is quite the authority on all things Sherlock Holmes. Like James Lovegrove, he has penned these, the later writings of Dr. Watson on an elderly Holmes's exploits in wartime England. Sherlock Holmes: The Lord of the Dead is the next in this series, but first let's get onto The Spirit Box as it is the second of the Mann novels I have read so far. As in the Gods of War by James Lovegrove, Holmes and Watson are retired from sleuthing, enjoying (or not) endless days of solitude where they can take up their safer pursuits. Holmes is the more bored by this than Watson who, as it is 1915 and pained by England being in the grip of war. A knock at the door brings him out of his troubles when a young man delivers a message from Mycroft Holmes about three deaths he believes are inexplicably linked. The deaths are of Captain John Cummins, a British Army officer who urged surrender before tossing himself into a tiger enclosure at London Zoo, a suffragette, Mary Temple, who threw herself under an Underground train and MP Herbert Grange who worked at the War Office and once gave a pro-German speech before hurling himself into the Thames.

Holmes has a hard time thinking of any connection between the three of them, believing the whole thing is one of Mycroft's twisted ways of getting Holmes hopes up of a great case to unravel. It isn't long before Holmes thinks that the two of them are just coincidental, while the Herbert Grange one actually gives him cause for concern. Leaving the other two cases behind, Holmes further investigates Grange as he needs to gather all the necessary data before he can be sure the man has been the victim of a murder.

Holmes so far has got nothing of consequence from Grange's body, but an investigation of his house uncovers an assortment of photographs taken using a spectrograph generator to simulate ghostly auras around the person's image. This, coupled with the belief by others that he was interested in the occult due to another's influence, seems to lead Holmes in the right direction. The more he finds about the man, the more he finds about the Spirit Box. The Spirit Box is "a practise originating in the West Indies, in which the soul of a person is captured and trapped within a small wooden casket, the eponymous 'spirit box.'"The shaman then has control over the person's soul and can use their magic to make the person do as they are bid by him.

Mann has penned several novels; The Affinity Bridge, The Osiris Ritual, The Immortality Engine, Ghosts of Manhattan, Ghosts of War, Gods of Karnak, and Ghosts of Empire. Other than this Holmes novel, his genres include steampunk, Victorian fantasy and Dr. Who fiction. In The Spirit Box, it is as if Mann has successfully continued Conan Doyle's work on Holmes and Watson and rightfully taking them out of retirement and into another world of the occult and would-be scandal in wartime England. The ingredients are what make it an effortless read for those used to the wit and wisdom of Conan Doyle's original works. Where these well-known characters are brought into Mann's original story and made to thrash out a conclusion is the best yet. As an added extra to this novel, there is a short story from the casebook of Newbury & Hobbes featuring Sir Maurice Newbury called The Lady Killer.

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## Mabji says

Das war mal eine Geschichte der anderen Art.

Ich fand, dass die Stimmung die im ersten Weltkrieg auf John einwirkt, sehr gut eingefangen werden konnte. Auch werden die Szenarien der Welt um sie herum immer wieder geschickt genug eingefädelt, sodass die Geschichte nicht wie ein Isoliertes Konstrukt wirkt.

Der Fall selbst war recht unterhaltsam, auch wenn ich fand, dass das Ende recht plötzlich kam und hier und da ein paar lose Fäden blieben, was Dr. Watson aber ja selbst aufgefallen ist.

Insgesamt bin ich mit diesem Buch sehr zufrieden.

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