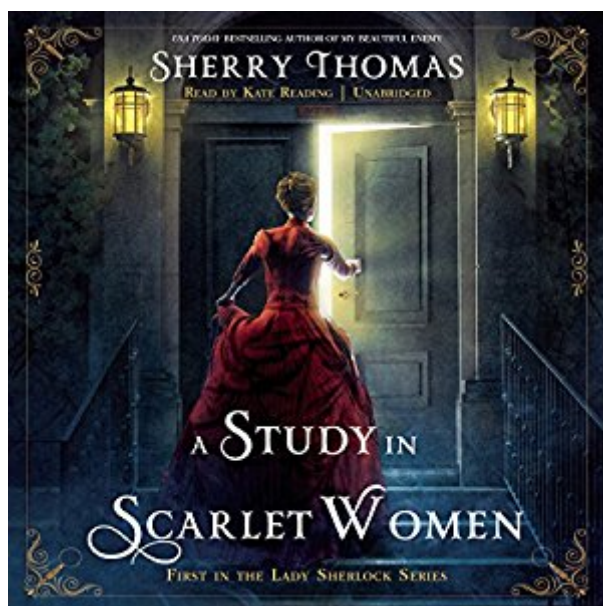


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A Study In Scarlet Women: The Lady Sherlock Series, Book 1



Synopsis

USA Today best-selling author Sherry Thomas turns the story of the renowned Sherlock Holmes upside down. With her inquisitive mind, Charlotte Holmes has never felt comfortable with the demureness expected of the fairer sex in upper-class society. But even she never thought that she would become a social pariah, an outcast fending for herself on the mean streets of London. When the city is struck by a trio of unexpected deaths and suspicion falls on her sister and her father, Charlotte is desperate to find the true culprits and clear the family name. She'll have help from friends new and old, but in the end, it will be up to Charlotte, under the assumed name Sherlock Holmes, to challenge society's expectations and match wits against an unseen mastermind.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Charlotte Holmes is charming in this gender-bent Sherlock story. The plot has some pleasant twists in familiarly Sherlock-like ways, as Charlotte exercises her ability to solve troubling cases while also attempting, not always successfully, to navigate her own social situation. With the gender dynamics that drive large portions of the plot firmly in mind, I was slightly disappointed that the author didn't fully translate some of the original relationship dynamics of Sherlock's situation. My deepest disappointment was that the Mycroft parallel character was not, in fact, related to Charlotte. That he's a step removed, though, does create potential for the author to eventually take this character in a new direction. I look forward to the next volume, I want to see where this goes.

I love Sherry Thomas' writing and really enjoyed this book. It is quite different from her historical romances, but still has the interesting deep characters I have come to expect from her books. This take on Sherlock Holmes - a genre I also love - is wonderful. The lead up to her becoming the character we know as Sherlock complete with the Baker street address is cunning but also felt natural to the character. The mystery was perfect - it was not obvious but also could be put together if you were really paying attention. None of this secret character no one has heard of making a last minute appearance nonsense. In short - I loved the book and can't wait for the next installment!

As a lifelong Sherlockian, I have always enjoyed the numerous efforts of writers to imitate, emulate, copy, enlarge, extend, and embellish the Canon. I was delighted when Laurie King introduced the remarkable Mary Russell with the clear intention of suggesting feminine equivalence. This novel carries the notion a bit further; the true gender of SH has now been revealed. HE is SHE. The book has slow places. There is a great deal of detail not all of it well handled. There is somewhat tentative development in several of the major characters. There were also hints of what is yet to come such as the barest, delicate mention of the arch enemy of the future. But none of that sort of thing matters. This is the beginning of what I hope will be a great series holding in it all the elements of what we expect from any true tale involving the in this case Mistress.

Sherry Thomas is a writer of extraordinary talents. Her stories are complex, inventive, and creative. She understands, and through her characters explains the mores of the Victorian era by the way they are told they must live their lives; along with the decisions they decide to make in order to shape those lives. All of these attributes of Ms. Thomas's storytelling are apparent in 'A Study in Scarlet Women.' In the book we find our main character, Charlotte Holmes, becoming the talented and insightful detective, Sherlock Holmes. All of the characters in the book are interesting, and compelling, and the mystery is complex. This is the first book in a what will be a new series featuring our intriguing heroine, Charlotte Holmes. I'm looking forward to the next installment in this series, and renewing my acquaintance with Mr. Thomas's new characters.

I really wanted to like this novel and eventually I did, but it was a struggle. The birth of "Sherlock" is painful, inexplicable, and laborious until the arrival of Mrs. Watson. (The pseudonym is in use far before there is any reason for such a guise.) The downfall of Charlotte feels contrived and Lord Ingram is pointlessly obscured in mystery--in spite of the fact that he is the first person we meet. I was, however, pleased by the abundance of strong, intelligent women who felt appropriate for the

time, if not altogether content with the world as it is in the late 1880s. Speaking of these strong, intelligent women: the characters state that no one could be mad at Mrs. Watson and it is true beyond a doubt. She saved this book--she and the Inspector, who must be credited with the fact that I managed to read as far as Mrs. Watson's arrival. Honestly, I could read a book about just Alice and the Inspector and be more than happy--they are endearing from the moment they step onto the page. By the end, I did truly like Charlotte and Ingram and I plan to give the next in the series a chance. Now that the players have been assembled and emerged, more or less, from the London fog as complex and interesting characters, it seems only fair to give them an opportunity to show what they can do. The promise of further adventures with a focus on Charlotte and Ingram has me intrigued--an interest I wouldn't have been confident in predicting at the outset of this novel.

I enjoyed this a lot. Sherry Thomas always has a lovely way with language, and it really shines through here. I loved Charlotte, and Livia, and Mrs. Watson. It was fascinating to see how the gender swap affected such well-known characters, how it shifted, enriched and changed them. However, I thought this book suffered a little from being the first in a series. So much was set up - I don't think we even get a Charlotte POV scene until more than 1/3 into the book. For that reason, I think the second book will probably be even better. I also had a bit of difficulty keeping track of all the Lords and Ladies and such. Particularly in the beginning, when they were first introduced. But I got there in the end. If you go into this book familiar with Sherry Thomas' historical romances, be warned that this isn't one of them. There's very little romance, and what is there is with a married man.

The recent interest in all things "Sherlock" has led to some very interesting stories. This is certainly one. Making good use of the societal restrictions applied by gender at the time, we are offered a marvelous look at what one very intelligent and resourceful young woman does to guarantee her freedom. It is well thought out and equally well written. The characters are engaging. I look forward to further adventures of Sherlock and Watson.

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