



A Study in Murder

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The year is 1917 and Major John Watson is held in a notorious prisoner of war camp deep in Germany, there as Medical Officer for the British prisoners. With the Allied blockade of Germany, food is perilously short in the camp and when a new prisoner is murdered all assume the poor chap was killed for his Red Cross parcel. Watson, though, isn't so sure. Something isn't quite what it seems and a creeping feeling of unease tells Watson there is more to this than meets the eye. And when an escape plot is apparently uncovered in his hut and he is sent to solitary confinement, he knows he has touched a nerve. If Watson is to reveal the heinous crimes that have occurred at the camp, he must escape before he is silenced for good. All he needs is some long-distance help from Sherlock Holmes...

A Study in Murder Details

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From Reader Review A Study in Murder for online ebook

Mary-Ellen Lynn says

Re-workings of the Holmes and Watson partnership have become a literary fashion. Robert Ryan's latest work (the third in the series) offers a thrilling tale. It is set in 1917, during which time Watson is being held captive in a German POW camp. Following a suspicious death, the camp authorities call upon Watson to investigate; but when others die Watson suspects that the deaths are not of natural causes. As he channels what he has learned from Holmes, he begins to ruffle feathers through his investigations and it becomes clear that he needs to watch his back. Meanwhile, the game is afoot to rescue Watson, spelling certain danger for Holmes.

Ryan weaves his magic in exploring the famous relationship of the duo; working independently to each other, they are both moving towards the same end.

Full of suspense and intrigue, this book will delight fans of the Conan Doyle canon and newcomers alike, not only for its literary inter-textuality but also for its strong historicity.

Jonathan says

Watson is back, but stuck in a prisoner of war camp. The story opens with a seance, its relevance is not made clear to us at first, but suffice to say that it leads to Watson being involved in a rather unusual crime. The plot gets more complex, and forces outside the camp move towards stopping the investigation from continuing. This being the war, and Watson being behind enemy lines he finds his own life in almost continual danger. Holmes makes a reappearance, along with Churchill and Watson's stalwart companion Mrs Gregson. The denouement when it comes is full of surprises, and helps make this a thoroughly entertaining page-turner of a novel.

Sarah says

Not quite as good as the previous 2 books.

Subtracting a star for the major annoyance of reading so much bad German spoken by native Germans. Full of mistakes, lacks basic grammar and probably done via google translate.

Looking forward to get to the next book though, now that the blasted Mrs Gregson is out of the picture. Don't think I could handle much more of her antics.

Kate says

While I still enjoy this series I do feel this was possibly a weaker book - more 3 1/2 stars. I loved the depiction of the camp and the mystery within the camp but felt overall there was just far too much going on and that tying everything together at the end was a bit forced.

Vikas Datta says

Recreates the period and personas quite well... but a little too complicated and too full of gratuitous violence ...

Roseb612 says

Třetí díl série a po slabším druhém dílu opět velmi dobrá knížka. Vrací se zde několik postav z prvního i druhého dílu, rozbuřené dříve do sebe začínají zapadat a také se poprvé (alespoť co jsem si v domě) více pracuje s odkazy na původními Doyleovy texty. Ostatně v originále se kniha jmenuje A Study in Murder, na Studii v šarlotové (A Study in Scarlet) se v ní odkazuje opakovaně a jeden z hlavních hybatelů dříve je postava z Poslední poklony Sherlocka Holmese. Nejsem zase takový znalec Holmese, takže tohle mi v předchozích dílech chybělo (pokud tam tedy nějaké výraznější odkazy na holmesovský kánon byly).

Znáte část dříve se odehrává v německých zajateckých táborech a autorovi se podařilo jejich atmosféru vykreslit stejně skvěle jako frontové linie v prvním dílu. Samotná zápleтка táborových úmrtí je hodně zajímavá a její finální rozuzlení je opravdu nečekané a šokující - za to u mě získává knížka body navíc. Boční linie s výměnou Watsona do Holandska, záchrannou misí atd. je už taková těšnička na dortu. (view spoiler)

Nečekaná zápleтка, zajímavé prostředí, pomrkávání na tenáře předchozích dílů i Arthura Conana Doylea - prostě pohodová knížka, která potěšila, takže u mě zasloužené čtyři hvězdičky. A teď jen jestli si pořádkem na překlad čtvrtého dílu nebo si ho pořádkem anglicky.

Kontext: Dřív jsou na týden u babiček, tak je doma pořádný klid a víc času na čtení :-)

První věta: "Někdy mrtví mluvili příliš."

Poslední věta: "Pošlete ho dál, prosím." "

Bill says

Having been a little disappointed with the second in this series, I approached this one with a little trepidation. My fears were ungrounded. I felt it was closer in spirit to Ryan's first Dr. Watson novel and a return to the gripping plotting of that book. This book has very little of Holmes in it, but that was not really a problem - in fact, it was nice spending time with Watson again without Ryan's Holmes. The focus on Watson and Gregson, with little attention paid to Holmes was the main reason I liked this book as well as well as the first one. The way the book took elements of Doyle's "His Last Bow" also worked well in this context. The historical elements of WWI prisoners was also intriguing. I did feel that Ryan's bringing back the sniper from Book 1 of the series was a little unnecessary, and seemed to be a somewhat duplicate of the plan Mrs. Gregson dreams up to save Watson, using a captured German, in her case, the evil spy, Mrs. Pillbody. The book stayed with me for several days after I finished, although that was mainly because I found the ending not disappointing but disheartening. An expected deus ex machine and a surprising death saddened me and I did wish Ryan had gone a different way at the end.

Agnesxnitt says

At the end of the previous novel - The Dead Can Wait - we left Dr/Major Watson badly burned and in a German Field hospital after cracking the case and confronting the antagonist in No Man's Land.

Since then, he has been transferred to a German POW camp where he has been tending the other prisoners and biding his time.

A prisoner exchange is being arranged, and as he is of the age and profession deemed appropriate to hand back, Watson prepares to leave. But an old case casts a long shadow, and the German Agent/Spy, Von Bork - from the last Holmes story, 'His Last Bow' - is on the prisoner exchange committee and gets Watson pulled out at the last minute in revenge for the Spy's humiliation at Holmes and Watson's hands.

Von Bork's revenge continues, as he gets Watson and his batman from the camp transferred to one of the worst camps further within Germany. On the way there, Watson is greeted by Von Bork who takes the opportunity to rub salt in the wound and then has Watson's batman shot in cold blood.

Watson arrives at the new camp, bleak, cold, where prisoners are charged twice the going rate for supplies and food outside of their budget is mostly sawdust and rat meat. Watson is greeted with suspicion and distrust, has his belonging stolen and then is thrown into solitary confinement for possession of an escape plan map he knew nothing about.

Released from the prison within the prison, the Camp Commandant, who learnt his trade of salesmanship in America before the war, tells Watson that he had been sent with a dossier of Watson's being a spy, an agent provocateur and generally someone who was not supporting the British effort in the conflict - a troublemaker and rabble rouser. The Camp Commandant, Mad Bill, now makes it known that is not true and sends Watson on his way back to his fellow prisoners.

His fellow inmates apologise to him, and Watson discovers an escape plan which makes him feel distinctly uneasy - and begins his investigation.

Meanwhile, back in London, Georgina Gregson is working for a POW Welfare Parcels Association, trying to find out where Watson is. Her tenacity knows no bounds and she sweet talks a senior Army officer into helping her - and ends up involving the deadly Miss Pillbody, aka Ilse Brandt, a Sie Wolfe/Sea Wolf - German Naval Intelligence Agent and trained killer.

The third strand is, of course, the Great Detective. While Watson investigates and does his best to survive a punishing German winter in his POW Camp, and Mrs Gregson seeks a way to free him, Holmes has been approached by Von Bork who offers a bargain, albeit a devilish one.

Von Bork will ensure Watson's freedom and return to Britain under one exchange deal - Holmes must take his place.....

A many convoluted turn of plot and location, this third novel in the Dr Watson thriller series had me race through it again.

Another library book so being returned this weekend, hoping I can find the 4th (and currently last in the series) novel....

Josh Griffiths says

A Study in Murder is a disappointment, to say the least. The pacing continues to be spot-on perfect, the characters are rich and vivid, and the descriptions of the First World War, this time in a German POW camp, make you feel like you're really there. But that's all it has going for it.

The mystery this time around in this mystery novel is as thin and shallow as a Dan Brown yarn, with a major plot-hole getting brushed aside by none other than Mycroft Holmes as just a coincidence. It's solved too

quickly and easily, yet is overly-elaborate and doesn't make much sense, and isn't even the core of the book. Instead, the heart of the book is about getting Watson out of a POW camp, with the mystery feeling like it was begrudgingly tacked on to appease Sherlock fans.

The biggest problem however is the ending. With it's rushed state and silly plot twist, and the fact that the entire story was leading up to this one moment, it leaves a lot to be desired.

Without spoiling too much, a major character in the last two books (and barely in this one) and a major character from the first book returning for this one both die. I have no problem with major characters dying, especially in a book about war. But - and I reiterate this - they're major characters, and their deaths should both serve a purpose beyond shocking the reader, and be given reverence. That is not the case with this ending. For one of the characters, we're not told they're killed until the second to last page. For the other, it too isn't acknowledged until the last few pages, and even then, nobody seems to care all that much. It's barely mentioned, and nobody seems all that upset about it. It makes what had been a fantastic character and makes them feel utterly meaningless and pointless.

The Dr. Watson at War series has been fantastic so far, and I've been a huge advocate for it. It's a shame to see Robert Ryan has so clearly run out of steam by just the third book. Hopefully the fourth (and so far final) book in the series, The Sign of Fear, will turn things back around, but without this major character, that seems unlikely.

Keith Currie says

Doctor Watson is a prisoner of war in 1916 Germany where he attempts to solve what may have been murder at a séance involving other prisoners. In the meantime, others, including Sherlock Holmes, attempt to have him freed.

This is an exciting adventure story - implausible, but not risible - and a lot of fun, although with a tragic twist at the end.

Lee says

Weakest Book so far. I really enjoyed the first two in the series but in this one I'm having problems connecting to Watson. It's just so very slow. Also the supernatural aspect of it is a bit off putting. There is a decent plot and really good fleshed out characters but it's just not grabbed me. On reading the blurb I thought that this would be the best one yet sadly not. Will continue on with the series though. Narration great..

Fiona says

Two and a half stars. I took off half a star because of the repeated references to St Barts. Nobody associated with St Bartholomew's hospital would call it anything other than it's full title or Barts.

For what it's worth I doubt that Mrs Gregson, even in her own head, would use the adjective menstrual. She was a Victorian woman, a VAD, whose limited nursing training would have been directed solely at helping men. She would most likely have used the colloquial vocabulary of the day. I was unclear whether this part

of the story was essential to the plot or simply added for shock value.

Those points aside, I found it a disappointing read. The best parts were when Watson was writing an account of another case. That did have a real flavour of the original characters.

Linda Hepworth says

I never felt fully engaged with this story - maybe because I discovered that it was the third in a series. However, the plotting didn't hold my attention and I kept on feeling that I was missing out on some important background information. In the end I did finish it - but then felt that I had wasted my time.

PETER SYMONDS says

Another excellent one

Really enjoyed this. I'm a big fan of the original Holmes stories and these have a similar feel while also being exciting and page turning. They'd adapt for TV pretty well too.

Jota Houses says

La tercera aventura del Dr. Watson en la Gran Guerra no resulta tan interesante como las anteriores. A un caso interesante para Watson le añaden toda una serie de tramas dignas de los hermanos Marx para forzar la aparición de antiguos personajes. La suspensión de la credulidad se desmorona ante tal acumulación de despropósitos y resulta difícil mantener el interés. Como extra un relato clásico apócrifo de Sherlock Holmes que no está del todo mal.
