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A Study in Lavender: Queering Sherlock Holmes

By Elka Cloke, Rajan Khanna, Stephen Osborne, Ruth Sims, Michael G. Cornelius



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What other characters from English literature have captivated hearts and minds as thoroughly as Sherlock Holmes and his loyal companion John Watson? Many fans imagine the relationship between these men is deep and more than platonic. In *A Study in Lavender*, the Holmes universe is queered and authors have devised stories in which Holmes and Watson are lovers, or investigate mysteries of inverts hidden from the laws and cultures of the Victorian era; even the indomitable Lestrade has his turn at love; and eerie apparitions in the night sky, reminiscent of Jules Verne, draw Holmes to Cleveland Street, home to an infamous scandal.



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Editorial Review

Review

Each story is well written, and that is pretty rare in any anthology. Anyone with an interest in Sherlock Holmes and homosexuality is going to need to add this to their collection. --Gay Sherlock Holmes blog

Study in Lavender, edited by Joseph DeMarco, is a new anthology from Lethe Press that features a variety of queer-themed stories set in the Sherlock Holmes canon(s); some are (obviously) about Holmes and Watson's relationship, but others deal with characters like Lestrade or focus on cases that involve queer folks. It's a neat project featuring predominantly early-to-mid-career writers, some who regularly write queer fiction, some who write romance, and some of whom are more familiar to speculative fiction readers Rajan Khanna, Lyn C. A. Gardner, Michael G. Cornelius, and Elka Cloke, for example.

Scholars and fans have been arguing about the implications of queerness in the Holmes canon for a long time it's a popular topic. Two men in an intense emotional relationship, living together, sharing spaces and finances and their lives; well. It's suggestive, and it's intriguing. Both of the most recent big-name interpretations of the Holmes stories the Robert Downey, Jr. movie and the BBC's delightful Sherlock have played with the intensity of the relationship between Holmes and Watson, explored it and made suggestions about it.

This book seeks to do the same, but much more openly, as well as exploring the possibilities of other queer folks whose lives may have intersected that of the Great Detective. --Brit Mandelo for Queering SFF at Tor.com

A positive plethora of corpses, deerstalkers, gas lamps and 'unnatural' acts. Lethe Press and a bevy of talented authors including Stephen Osbourne and Ruth Sims faithfully tint Holmes and his world in a delicious lavender hue. A Victorian joy! ----Erastes, acclaimed gay historical romanticist and author of *Mere Mortals*

This "study" is a brilliant blend of pastiche and homage in which Holmes and his companion-in-sleuthing, Watson, are relocated by 11 contributors from foggy Victorian streets to an alternate storytelling universe. In Stephen Osborne's "The Adventure of the Bloody Coins," for example, Sherlock's mysterious brother, Mycroft, has "the conversation I've avoided for far too many years" after his men's club is revealed to be the site of homosexual dalliances in which he participates. In Lyn C.A. Gardner's "The Adventure of the Hidden Lane," Watson expresses his love for Holmes with the plaintive statement, "But I'm not sure I can live this way forever. I'm the sort of man who needs a companion of the heart, not just the mind." And in the anthology's most ambitious story, "The Well-Educated Young Man," a young rent boy's attraction to Sherlock inspires lives that bridge decades. DeMarco has taken the concept of fanfiction a genre where straight characters are re-imagined as gay and elevated it to an admirably inspirational literary level. --Richard Labone for Book Marks

About the Author

Philadelphia-native Joseph R.G. DeMarco has been involved with the mystery genre for decades. He is the author of the acclaimed series of Marco Fontana novels.

Users Review

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Debra Lovern:

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