

No One Notices the Boys: Baker Street Inquiries #2

Michelle Birkby

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Michelle Birkby's historical mystery novel *No One Notices the Boys* is riveting as it traces an investigation in Sherlock Holmes's London.

Martha, Sherlock Holmes's housekeeper, is bedridden in a private women's hospital ward. In the dead of the night, someone is murdered in their bed—not once, but twice. With the help of Mary Watson, Martha observes the other women in her ward to gather clues about the murderer.

Among the hospitalized are Eleanor, a nosy older woman who causes trouble among the nurses by spreading their personal information; Flo, a warm, chatty woman who likes listening to gossip; Miranda, a Catholic woman with a sense of religious duty; and Sarah, who writhes and mutters in her bed. None are saved from Martha and Mary's suspicion.

Martha's tenacious investigation leans on classic observations and questionings with her suspects. As Martha reflects on the lives and personalities of the other patients—as well as on the drab nature of hospital life—she discovers another of London's unsolved crime mysteries: the disappearance of young boys across the city, whom she suspects to be the Pale Boys, humans-turned-vampires who wreak havoc under the cover of darkness.

Haunted by the blackmailer whom she was unable to catch in her previous case with Mary, and navigating a man's world, Martha doubts her abilities, believing herself to be too weak. However, put up to the task by Holmes and Watson, Martha summons the strength and perseverance to thrive in the hostile city, where personal and religious forces bleed into one. Martha's heart-pounding flight through London's darkest secrets reveals that more is amiss than it first seemed.

No One Notices the Boys is a thrilling historical mystery novel about a woman's work to uncover the twisted nature of humanity's worst beings.

ALI ORTIZ (January / February 2022)

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