



Sherlock & Watson Wired

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Ann Kimbrough

Everything Journals

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A hybrid tale of traditional Sherlock Holmes and twenty-first-century technology, Sherlock and Watson Wired is an illustrated and interactive mystery novel.

Ann Kimbrough's graphic mystery novel *Sherlock and Watson Wired* is an interactive modern-day adaption of Sir Arthur's Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes adventures.

When bored teenagers Bizzy, Cheese, Kendra, and Jett decide to start a random text group chat, they never expect to be drawn into a murder mystery. Still, they find that they are able to text with the great Sherlock Holmes himself. They are intrigued by his tale of murder on the moor and decide to help him crack the case.

Other than brief excerpts of narration and note-taking space, the story unfolds via text message. Each page features a large phone outline, with the dialogue inside of it appearing next to an avatar representing one of the characters. Much of Sherlock's dialogue is quoted from the Doyle short story that *Sherlock and Watson Wired* is based on. The side margins are filled with images corresponding to what's being discussed in the text thread, though there are so many illustration styles for these images that they often feel disjointed and out of place.

The book is filled with additional resources including glossaries of terms and characters. After every few pages of dialogue, there are pages on which to record clues and observations. Some include specific prompts, such as recording details about the murder scene, while others are more general. There is also a series of "spoilers" that correspond to specific pages in the story, making it easy to get caught up at any point.

Some glaring questions are left unaddressed, though. The teenagers are in the present day, while the mystery occurs in 1887. While they are willing to accept the time discrepancy, it is unclear how Watson and Sherlock are actually communicating, since they do not have phones. And because the action occurs in the past, the teenagers are restricted to dialogue and research, which limits their actual participation in the case. Much of the story is made up of commentary as the teenagers wait for Sherlock and Watson to report back.

Even over a series of texts, however, the teenagers' personalities shine through. Bizzy is compassionate, Kyndra is curious, and Cheese is always ready with a quip. Their commentary keeps the story lighthearted, even as Sherlock describes the deadly case. This humor is heightened by the juxtaposition of the teenagers' slang with Sherlock and Watson's nineteenth-century English. And the characters are patient with each other when misunderstandings arise (as when Cheese does not know what a telegram is), illustrating the importance of good communication and respect. The end of the story sees the mystery solved and the unlikely friends sorry to part but glad for the adventure.

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VIVIAN TURNBULL (March 1, 2023)

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