



The Seven-Percent Solution

Nicholas Meyer

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First discovered and then painstakingly edited and annotated by Nicholas Meyer, *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* relates the astounding and previously unknown collaboration of Sigmund Freud with Sherlock Holmes, as recorded by Holmes's friend and chronicler, Dr. John H. Watson. In addition to its breathtaking account of their collaboration on a case of diabolic conspiracy in which the lives of millions hang in the balance, it reveals such matters as the real identity of the heinous professor Moriarty, the dark secret shared by Sherlock and his brother Mycroft Holmes, and the detective's true whereabouts during the Great Hiatus, when the world believed him to be dead.

The Seven-Percent Solution Details

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Author : Nicholas Meyer

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Lindsay Stares says

Humph. Color me unimpressed. Interesting concept, not so well executed. I'll believe that it was impressive when published (and the general populace still respected Freud when it was written), and maybe I'm too much of a Holmes fan (and too much of a Holmes/Russell fangirl).

But it felt to me from the beginning that Meyer didn't have any new ideas, and it just rankled me; the way he seemed to make excuses for why his book doesn't read like Conan Doyle, and kept pointing out allusions to this or that Holmes story. 'Nudge, nudge, See! I read the original, and all these other books too! Aren't I smart!'

I've never read a chase scene that was so... slow.

Besides which: SPOILER*****

He kind of halfway tries to make it fit with the story (Final Problem/Empty House) as written, by saying that Watson wrote those to cover the real story (cocaine induced dementia, soul-searching holiday).

However, if you're going to write Moriarty out of the Holmes canon, you better have a damn good story to replace it, and he doesn't.

Nitpicky Sherlockian Alert

ALSO: It doesn't work. The explanation at the start of The Final Problem is that Watson writes the story to explain what happened to Moriarty, since his brother "defends [his] memory [with].... an absolute perversion of the facts". If we were to take The Seven-Per-Cent Solution as true in world, then Moriarty, despite being a jerk, is not evil, and ALIVE in England. Why in the world would Watson write a story accusing an innocent man of being a criminal mastermind? It doesn't make a bit of sense. If he were to write a story to "cover" Holmes' disappearance, he could have written anything! Meyer says that Watson wrote it, but never why, other then to 'cover' the true facts and because Holmes makes a joke on the last page. Humph.

End Nitpicking Alert

Finally, the part where he's actually getting over the cocaine addiction is BORING, and the mystery that pads out the second half of the book is too. Sigh.

Saman Kashi says

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Octavio Aragao says

Uma das melhores aventuras apócrifas de Sherlock Holmes e que serviu de base para minha releitura do personagem no conto A Aventura do Americano Audaz, junto com o romance Moriarty, de John Gardner. O envolvimento de Sherlock Holmes com os prenúncios da Primeira Guerra Mundial e suas consultas - e consequente "cura" - com Sigmund Freud fazem desse um romance imperdível para os seguidores da obra canônica de Conan Doyle.

Lee says

To his credit, Meyer not only disregards the unwritten rule that modern Sherlock Holmes stories must feature Moriarty as either the main villain or in an ominous cameo, he goes one better and first introduces and then relegates the incongruous villain to his rightful place.

I always thought that “The Final Problem” and “The Empty House” felt the least Holmes-like of all of Doyle’s original stories. The introduction of a mastermind behind most of the crime in London seemed all too sudden and very much out of character from the other stories. Holmes seems quite off his form in these stories, flitting about skittishly and offering none of the brilliant deductions from prosaic clues that make the other stories so fun to read. Despite Doyle’s liking for “The Final Problem”, I would venture that if all Holmes stories were like it, most people today would never have heard of Sherlock Holmes.

Meyer devises an ingenious explanation for how such an incompatible character as Moriarty ever intruded into the canon, and how Watson came to write a story so jarringly different from his other accounts of the great detective. If Meyer’s book had done nothing more, it would still have been well worth reading. Meyer goes on, however, to give Holmes a grand mystery to solve, deserving of the larger canvas of a full-length novel, and to definitively deal with the great detective’s cocaine addiction.

But wait, that’s not all! Meyer takes the father of psychiatry from history and inserts him into the novel as Holmes’ worthy counterpart in another field -- or as Holmes tells Freud: “You have succeeded in taking my methods: observation and inference, and applied them to the inside of a subject’s head.”

Ibrahim Abdul-malik says

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Trin says

50¢ at a book sale, and with my current love of Sherlockia, I couldn't resist, even though I was pretty sure I would hate it. I didn't hate it. It's too well-intended to hate, too joyfully fannish, and I must admit that some of Meyer's footnotes on this "found" manuscript made me laugh out loud. (In case you're curious, it was the one where Watson writes, "I believe it was in Julius Caesar that Shakespeare said...*" and Meyer's footnote is simply, "*It's not.") However, this fannishness was I guess also part of what I objected to: I mean, it's published fanfic, people! And while, you know, not that there's anything wrong with that...I guess on some level I do see something wrong with that. I can't take it seriously. I kept wanting to comment on Meyer's LJ: "Sherlock Holmes meeting Freud? What an awesomely cracktastic idea! LOL" Furthermore, it didn't help that the mystery that pads out the book was just that...padding. And not particularly interesting padding, either. Some of Arthur Conon Doyle's plots may have been a bit...silly, but they're so atmospheric, so well done! 'The Speckled Band' is really creepy! So's The Hound of the Baskervilles! The train chase in this was just...long.

So, with modern copyright laws, will Harry Potter ever come into the public domain? 'Cause man, then Harry's going to be meeting a lot of people nuttier than Freud, that's for sure.

Dan Schwent says

Sigmund Freud cures Sherlock Holmes of his cocaine addiction, forces him to deal with his issues regarding Professor Moriarty, and gets involved in Holmes' case, complete with battle on the roof of a train. What more could you ask for?

Cherie says

To think that this is "the true story of Holmes' absence from Baker Street for those three years that he was gone" and that John Watson made up the two stories, namely The Final Solution and The Empty House to explain the absence is just too much, but a lovely story after all! If one cannot get enough of the Great Detective and his Boswell, Watson, it is one of the best.

I admire Mr. Meyer for imagining and writing such a wonderfully well done story of the two amazing companions of 221B Baker Street. I love how it was presented as a found manuscript of Dr. John H. Watson, written before his death in 1939. It brings back all we love about him and of his admiration and dedication to his friend Mr. Sherlock Holmes. It also presents us with such a unique view and a tremendous character in that of Doctor Sigmund Freud. The story of the cocaine addiction seems SO plausible, especially, if one has ever been bothered by and uncomfortable with Holmes' cocaine use in the Author Cannon Doyle stories when it is mentioned. Not so much that he used it, but what it could have come to because he did. Maybe...

What I admire about the story is the chance it gives the reader to re-visit the Holmes/Watson relationship. Another story, not just the detective/thinking part of the stories, but the plausible, human feelings the two felt for each other. For Dr. Watson to assume a leading role at the beginning. For him to tell and show us how much and how far he was willing to go for Holmes. He was willing to spend money like water, to sacrifice all to get Holmes to Dr. Freud in Vienna. All of this with the support of his wife and the help of Holmes' brother, Mycroft. How he suffered, along with Sherlock during the ordeal. How he saved his life on the train and the feeling of Holmes's words when he told Watson "*Never let them say you were merely my Boswell, Watson,*" he gasped when he could speak. "*Never let them say that.*" I loved it!!!

It is the emotional responses written into the stories of Holmes and Watson that make me come back and read them over and over. It is what will always bring me back to this one.

Jennifer Messina says

Apocrifo? Stento a crederci. Onore a Meyer per questa perla che avrei ingenuamente e senza indugi attribuito a Sir Conan Doyle.

Ben scritto, nessun particolare trascurato, magistrale trattazione del rapporto Holmes/Watson, brillante introduzione del personaggio di Freud all'interno del romanzo.

Ho approvato tutto, tranne la scelta più o meno azzardata di mettere eccessivamente in luce l'interiorità di Holmes.

Scott Rhee says

There is a growing oeuvre of Holmesiana out there, much of it pretty good. "The 7 Per Cent Solution", a short novel written in the '70s by Nicholas Meyer, cleverly pits Holmes and Watson against Holmes' true arch-enemy, with the aid of Sigmund Freud. For those die-hard Holmes fans, this novel takes place in the time period between Conan Doyle's "The Final Problem" and "The Adventure of the Empty House", in which Holmes supposedly battled Professor Moriarty to the death but "miraculously" survived. (Conan Doyle, tired of writing the series, encountered much rage from jilted fans who hated to see Holmes perish in "The Final Problem", so, by popular demand, he brought him back to life...) Meyer cleverly attributes the novel to Dr. John Watson and explains its remarkable "discovery" in the preface. A fun, quick read that is a good companion piece to the afore-mentioned Conan Doyle stories.

Eli Easton says

I read this for my Lifetime Challenge: **Year 1974**

Gosh, there were a lot of awesome books to choose from in 1974. I very nearly got pulled into Jaws, but decided I knew the story too well already. As a big fan of BBC Sherlock, I've been interested in everything Sherlockian in the past few years, so I settled down to listen to the audiobook of this one.

This book is written in a simulation of Dr. Watson's voice from the original stories, which is to say it reads like the 1800's even though it's from 1974. The voice-over actor was highly British and fusty, almost mincing in his delivery, which added to the antiquated vibe.

In the story, Watson is married and Sherlock has fallen deep into the hole of addiction. In an effort to cure him before he kills himself, Watson and Mycroft Holmes work together to trick Sherlock into a trip to Vienna, where a young doctor named Freud promises a cure from drug addiction. Once in Vienna, and post cure, a case arises. The last third of the book is an action-driven case that was a bit more OTT melodramatic than a typical Holmes case, but in a similar vein.

This is an easy, pot-boiler type of read that has some particularly nice touches. I liked seeing Freud and his family in this book, and the comparison between Freud's deduction methods and Sherlock's. The setting of Vienna and Bavaria was vividly drawn and beautiful. I liked the use of Toby, the bloodhound. And the way the author explained the REAL meaning of Moriarty was intriguing (in the afterward, he credits the idea to Holmesian scholars).

What I didn't love so much was the big action ending aboard a locomotive. It felt like the equivalent of a 15 minute car chase in a film. Quite cheesy and not really my thing. However, that didn't detract much from the book.

Recommended for any Holmes fan. On to 1975!

Matt says

A very fine read.

The first part of the book is the best. Here we learn that Holmes' addiction to Cocaine (a feature of the original stories) has caused him to become delusional. The result is that some of what we thought we knew about Holmes was misleading to say the least. Watson, fearing that Holmes addiction will destroy him, takes him to get psychiatry help from a young Sigmund Freud. Such a move might seem a little silly on Meyer's part; however, it works rather nicely. For the first half of the book I could not stop reading.

The second half of the book is still a fun read, but it did not grip me with the same "can't put it down" impulse. Not at least until the last 30 pages. Those last 30 pages are extremely exciting, involving a train chase and a fencing duel on top of the speeding train! But there is a rather silly plot regarding the powers of Europe and the social forces that will soon (34 years away) launch the first World War. This was unnecessary and contrary to the thrust of the original Holmes stories, where the bulk of Holmes cases presented to us were of ordinary people and events, not great world affairs - although Doyle often makes Watson allude to Holmes involvement with more historically important cases so it's not really too far fetched.

Even here, however, the book works and is just a splendid read. I look forward to reading more of Meyer's Holmes stories - he has at least two others - and recommend that others do the same.

Eric says

While no one can replace Arthur Conan Doyle, this homage by Nicholas Meyer is a fairly good attempt. It hits all the right notes -- with guest spots by favorites such as Professor Moriarty, Mycroft Holmes and Tobey the tracking dog -- as well as raises the stakes by adding the celebrity Dr. Sigmund Freud to the mix, which despite seeming to be inspired by television teams-ups like *Scooby Doo Meets Batman*, actually works fairly well in the story.

Amy Sturgis says

This was a very solid, very able Holmes pastiche. I quite enjoyed the way Meyer captured Watson's voice as narrator, worked in multiple references to Arthur Conan Doyle's original canon, dealt with Holmes's cocaine addiction, uncovered the "true" story of Moriarty, and incorporated the historical figure of Sigmund Freud as a character in the story. I definitely plan to read Meyer's other two Holmes novels.

I clearly see how this novel informed Michael Dibdin's *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story*, which also focuses on Sherlock's cocaine addiction and its relationship to Moriarty. Because that novel was so much darker and psychologically complex, I rather wish I'd read the novels in the opposite order. Meyer's would have seemed more daring if I hadn't already read Dibdin. Nonetheless, there are some great insights in *The Seven-Percent Solution* about not only Sherlock's nature, but also Mycroft's, as well. These were very satisfying.

Thus far my favorite pastiche remains *Dust and Shadow* by Lyndsay Faye, but I'm still just getting started on my reading. I most certainly would recommend this novel to anyone interested in non-canonical Holmesian literature.

Reese (whimsicalbibliophile) says

This book was recommended to me by Sil (anivlisandbooks), who could not have been more spot on with a recommendation! I really love the original Sherlock Holmes stories by Conan Doyle, and I love reading anything that extends that universe. The Seven Per-Cent Solution is in a way your usual retelling of a Sherlock Holmes story because it essentially retells The Reichenbach Falls by imaging a different reason why Holmes might disappear for months. What I liked about it, though, was that it was 1) a fairly plausible alternate explanation given the way Holmes is characterized in Conan Doyle's stories and 2) that it linked the stories into a broader historical context. Kind of like how the Conan Doyle original The Five Pips references racism in the U.S. and kind of pulls us out of the illusion of a closed Holmes universe, Meyers' book connects Holmes with Freud. When I first heard about the premise of connecting Holmes and Freud, I was immediately intrigued because, I mean, come on, that just promises all kinds of fun; the actual story doesn't disappoint. This was a quick read but very fun and gripping without becoming absurd, and there was still enough emotional weight to make it feel important to me. The writing was also a good imitation (I think) of how John Watson narrates in Conan Doyle's stories. All in all, a great read, and I would definitely recommend it if you like Sherlock Holmes, and again I can't thank Sil enough for recommending it to me!

Trigger Warnings: Drug use, depression, brief discussion of psychosis

Carson says

A lifelong Holmes fan, I try to get my hands on as many continuation stories and pastiches as I can. Many lists of the great pastiches list this one chief among them, so I figured it was about time I consumed it.

Let me start by saying (not at all pompously) that I am a big fan of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's works and consider myself a purist in that sense; I most enjoy works that are written in similar voice, structure and with nods to the original works. *Seven-Percent Solution* (no spoilers) takes a pretty major detour from some of the standard foundation and likely could exist just as well without that departure... but I understand why it was done and - in the end - some of my misgivings were met with understanding.

Holmes meeting Dr. Sigmund Freud, the climactic chase, and the mysteries throughout all felt classic Holmes. Overall, I'd give this 3 of 5 stars.

Sarah Sammis says

Sherlock Holmes is among an elite set of fictional characters who has outlived his creator and even his own written death (*The Final Problem* 1893). Holmes continues to solve crimes as written by a number of authors including this 1974 version, *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* by Nicholas Meyer. The book was made into a film in 1976, which I've enjoyed watching a number of times.

One thing that is universal across all these Sherlock Holmes tales (those by Doyle and these later ones) is that the stories are never told from Holmes's point of the view. In the Doyle style, the job of reporting Holmes's adventures falls on Dr. John Watson. Holmes throughout remains too unusual and too superhuman to understand, though Watson and other characters try.

Another commonality of the post-Doyle stories is the inclusion of famous historical figures and events. Sherlock Holmes is far better traveled and even more famous in these novels than he ever was in the Doyle's short stories. *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* is a classic example of Holmes-as-celebrity because he meets and manages to solve a mystery with Dr. Sigmund Freud.

In the film, maybe because Sherlock Holmes seems to lend himself to becoming a steampunk James Bond in movies, Dr. Freud is somewhat plausible. The entire cinematic adaptation borders on the surreal as an attempt to visualize the cocaine stupor Holmes is in for the first half of the story. That surreal approach makes Freud just one more aspect of the wackiness that is the 1976 film.

In the book, Dr. Freud seems like a forced detail. The whole business of Holmes's out of control addiction and the trickery that Watson goes through to get his friend to Vienna doesn't work. It's corny and out of character for both Watson and Holmes. It is a ridiculous means to an end to get the two to where the mystery is taking place.

There is nothing about the mystery of the missing heiress that couldn't be done in London or an estate in the countryside. Her ties to the Kaiser could still have been part of the plot without the silly trip to Vienna.

So if you like Sherlock Holmes stories, keep in mind that Nicholas Meyer's novel is flawed. See, though, if you can, the 1976 film adaptation of his novel. It takes advantage of the goofier bits of the novel to make a very entertaining film.

Antonio Rosato says

"Ciò di cui il mondo ha disperatamente bisogno è il tempo. Se avesse tempo, forse l'umanità metterebbe con le spalle al muro quella terribile metà di se stessa che sembra non abbia altro intento se non quello di compiere inutili opere di distruzione e di devastazione".

Piacevole lettura (anzi rilettura) su un'indagine "non ufficiale" che ha visto protagonisti Sherlock Holmes e John Watson. Dico "non ufficiale" perché, e chi ha letto il libro lo saprà già, non è la solita avventura scritta da sir Arthur Conan Doyle ma si tratta, diciamo così, di un "omaggio", datato 1974, alle gesta di Holmes e Watson di Nicholas Meyer, autore anche di un paio di episodi di "Star Trek" e, soprattutto, del bellissimo film "The Day After - Il giorno dopo".

Straordinario, divertente (la folle corsa con il treno mi ha strappato più di un sorriso) e sorprendente il mondo in cui lo stesso Meyer ha preso spunto (e le citazioni non mancano) dai libri di Conan Doyle per costruire ed intessere questa nuova pseudo-trama sul celebre investigatore, sul suo fido assistente/amico e, soprattutto, su un nuovo ed illustre coprotagonista (l'unico realmente esistito) che avrà il delicato compito di salvare Sherlock Holmes dall'unico nemico in grado di sconfiggere il nostro eroe: la dipendenza dall'eroina. Ma evito di farne il nome per non rovinare la lettura a chi ancora deve avvicinarsi a questo romanzo. Da segnalare anche la presenza del professor Moriarty: l'arcinemico di Sherlock Holmes, però, in questo romanzo è diventato un docile professore di matematica in balia delle teorie "complottiste" dell'investigatore. Infine, qualcosa mi ha fatto comunque storcere il naso: punto primo, va detto che il finale mi è sembrato talmente frettoloso che ho avuto la sensazione che Meyer o avesse finito le pagine a disposizione o non avesse proprio idea su come concludere la storia; punto secondo: tutti sappiamo che il nome di Watson è John, ma in alcuni passaggi Meyer lo ha chiamato "Jack". Svista troppo enorme per passare inosservata! Un libro che mi sento assolutamente di consigliare agli amanti del genere e a quanti vogliono passare qualche serata di sana spensieratezza.

[<https://rosatoeu.blogspot.it/2017/10/...>]

Mark says

Except for Sherlock Holmes and cocaine and Freud, the rest is all fuzzy.

Donna says

Sherlock Holmes, John Watson, and Sigmund Freud join forces to deal with Holmes cocaine addiction, to rescue a woman, and possibly to prevent a giant European war.
