

Book Review:

Sherlock Holmes and the Sword of Osman

By *Tim Symonds*

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In 2012 I was fortunate enough to be asked to review Tim Symonds book *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Bulgarian Codex*. I am a huge Conan Doyle fan, having read all of Holmes original stories many times.

Frankly I expected Symonds' tale to let the original down. I was pleasantly surprised in that I thoroughly enjoyed Symonds 2012 contribution to Holmes' exploits, and so was very happy to accept an invitation to review his new adventure – *Sherlock Holmes and the Sword of Osman*.

Symonds has yet again captured Holmes' aloof mannerisms and Watson's somewhat bumbling attempts at assistance, to the point where I forgot that Conan Doyle was not the mind behind the escapade.

The story in brief: Holmes and Watson are reunited after a threat is uncovered to steal the Sword of Osman from the ruler of the Turkish Empire – a theft that would see the fall of the Ottoman Empire and have cataclysmic results the world over as European powers would fight for the spoils and with it trade routes essential to the British. The world would be brought to the brink of war; the fortunes – and indeed lives – of

thousands are once again in Holmes' hands. A tale of espionage, double-crossing, intrigue, and murder ensues. But who is the mastermind behind the plot? It couldn't be Moriarty, Holmes' most dangerous and cunning adversary, after his watery demise at the end of *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Bulgarian Codex* (sorry if that was a spoiler), or could it...

I thoroughly enjoyed this romp through Edwardian-era Stamboul in high summer; with its colourful descriptions of jewelled swords that rule empires, ghosts that haunt palaces, and tyrannical rulers flanked by their murdering eunuchs.

The language and characters Symonds evokes are true to Conan Doyle's style, and he carries the reader along with Watson's engaging narrative style.

As with *the Case of the Bulgarian Codex* I didn't want the story to end. So if you, like me, are a Conan Doyle devotee, I recommend *the Sword of Osman* as a thoroughly enjoyable route to Conan Doyle escapism.