

# An Abominable Mess

## The Sherlock Christmas Special Sabotages Itself

ZOHEB MASHIUR

If you haven't yet seen the special episode of *Sherlock* that came out on January 1, don't read past this paragraph. What will follow is a spoiler-heavy analysis, so all you need to know for now is this: it is underwhelming but mandatory viewing if you want to watch Series 4 next year. Tough luck.

It's hard to know what to expect of a Christmas special, especially when the TV show is as unpredictable and confident as this one. Consider the boldness needed to take a show whose entire shtick is cleverly modernizing a 19th century saga, and to then throw this reinterpretation back into Conan Doyle's timeline. Episode titles for *Sherlock* traditionally are a play on the name of a Doyle original, allowing the show to set up and subvert audience expectations with a degree of cleverness, yet "The Abominable Bride" is a reference to a mere throwaway line in the books.

It would have been a pleasure to watch the series spin that cursory title into a full-blown, original case, with show-writers Gatiss and Moffat trying to man up to Conan Doyle on his own turf. A casual romp to start the year and keep us fans happy until 2017. And for a while the episode delivers just that.

With a characteristic flair for visual storytelling, "The Abominable Bride" does



a 19th century spin on the first few minutes of the very first episode from way back in 2010, shot-for-shot, down to the last comma. *Sherlock* the show is as smug as Sherlock the man, and the episode treats us to at least two other sequences as impressive as this, with the presentation of Lestrade's account of the titular Bride's ghostly rampage being the highlight. Also well done is Freeman's take on Watson the Victorian author, and as always he is the heart and soul of the story. In contrast, Cumberbatch's Sherlock is the inhuman plot device that he has regrettably

developed into, and his curious resistance to a change in setting is explained by the moment that just tears this promising episode to pieces.

It is all a dream. A chemical dream induced by a cocktail of drugs Sherlock has imbibed on the plane, for this episode really takes place mere minutes after the finale of Series 3, instead of a hundred-odd years before it. The case of the Bride is a sort of mental exercise in figuring out Moriarty's apparent resurrection, a plotting decision that is so unbelievably bad. Moffat and Gatiss create a perfectly good

plot, then render it irrelevant. It seems silly to care about the resolution of the 19th century plotline when it's just a clumsy vehicle for explaining something we could have waited to learn in Series 4.

Fitting, then, that The Abominable Bride was a passing reference in the books for she's just as disposable to *Sherlock* the series. Ill-timed and unnecessary jumps in and out of realities all for what? What do we learn about Moriarty's resurrection that was so important it needed to be told a year in advance, hijacking the plot? Only the confirmation that he's dead. Excellent! I mean, I did see him die, but thanks all the same.

The show does wrap up the Bride's murder, but in a way that just leaves a bad taste in the mouth. I do not think the lesson the episode attempts to impart is best served by Sherlock pontificating about women's place in Victorian society, while in a room surrounded by silent, hooded women. Women are a secret cult who conspire to murder men (which is good) is the clumsy message.

I love this show and enjoyed Series 3's turn to fanservice and gif-able moments because the writing was just as tight as ever. The latter quality is absent from "The Abominable Bride", wasting an opportunity to please fans of the show and the books. Molly Hooper in drag doesn't cut it.

# Alternatives to Coffee

TAIMUR RAHMAN

Coffee: the hot beverage that wakes us up, provides a kick to our daily performance and is a delight to drink. It gives us excuses to take someone out or stay up late for studies or games. While coffee is the jack of all trades, there exist several alternatives that do most of what coffee can do.

Tea: Every caffeine addict knows this guy. Little do they know that tea is coffee's

bigger, meaner brother that forces him to do his homework. Sure he doesn't quite pack a punch, but leaves a bitter aftertaste that coffee can only dream of having. Or maybe that's just because my cha-wala doesn't like me.

**Sniffing highlighter ink:** Our nose is one of the most used sense organs. Sniffing this aromatic substance is bound to have similar effects as coffee does. It's like tanning, but for the soul.

**Thinking about poor life decisions:** This

one's a fun choice out of these boring ones. Like coffee, it can be shared or done in solitude. It's preferred if done in solitude since it has that extra boost to keep us awake. Rethinking life decisions and chill?

**Self-harm:** While being general here, any type of self harm can substitute for coffee if you can firmly believe that coffee itself is self harm. Think about it, caffeine is a drug. Drugs are bad. Coincidence?

**Getting excited:** Man, if there's some-

thing that keeps me up at night, it's pure excitement. Have to study for the finals? Need to take your significant other out? Well then, start getting excited!

Excitement!  
In the end, coffee is a drink that can easily be replaced. Don't be a slave to coffee. Rise above, and be slaves to the alternatives instead.

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## The System

TYPES OF COFFEE DRINKERS



1. People who want coffee.



2. People who need coffee.



3. SHUT UP AND GIVE ME THE COFFEE.

