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The Great Shelby Holmes

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Book Review

Title: The Great Shelby Holmes

Author: Elizabeth Eulberg

Reviewer: Ariel Woodbury

Publisher: Bloomsbury

Year: 2012016

ISBN: 9781681190518

Pages: 243

Interest Level: Intermediate

Rating: Dependable



Review

John Watson had just moved away from his father and his friends to New York when he meets a strange nine-year-old girl named Shelby Holmes. She's tiny and not very good with people, but she can solve mysteries in a way that even the police can't. When a beloved dog vanishes, Shelby is asked to get on the case and John decides to follow along. Using her powers of observation, Shelby helps solve the case while John helps her solve a different mystery: how to be friends with someone.

While this book tries hard to be a new take on Sherlock Holmes, it is not very successful in that goal. The mystery is an unoriginal missing pet story common in detective stories for young readers. It tries to show Sherlock's classic struggle with forming relationships, but in a nine-year-old girl it comes off as disrespectful and condescending. It also seems very unlikely for young children to be allowed to wander New York City on their own and associate with any strangers they would like, even for a young genius like Shelby. Young readers are likely to enjoy the book, but it does not add anything particularly notable or exciting to the many Sherlock Holmes retellings.