

“Mr. Holmes”

Sherlock Holmes is the most iconic detective in English fiction. His powers of deduction have entertained generations of mystery fans. The latest iteration of this timeless character is “Mr. Holmes”. However, this not the man we associate with a deerstalker hat, an ever present pipe and his foil, Dr. Watson. “Mr. Holmes” is a very different take on this legendary sleuth.

Holmes (Ian McKellen) is now an old man living in the English countryside. His only companions are his long suffering housekeeper Mrs. Munro (Laura Linney) and her young son Roger. But despite the pastoral surroundings and his passion for bee keeping, Holmes’ “golden years’ are far from idyllic. He is constantly ruminating on the past and is afraid that senility is slowly eroding his mind.

One problem obsesses him. He knows he abandoned detective work when he was only 50 years old and that it had something to do with the last case he handled. The case involved the investigation of a young woman whose husband was suspicious of her activities but, like a dream you can’t quite recall when you awaken, he can only remember bits and pieces of the case. All he is sure of is that he must have made a mistake and that it ended his career.

Those of us in the audience are as confused as Holmes. A number of flashbacks give us fragmentary pieces of the case but it is like a jig saw puzzle with some of the pieces missing. But Holmes keeps turning the case over in his mind and bit by bit the answer slowly emerges. He finally “solves” the mystery that has bedeviled him for over 30 years. In the process he learns an important lesson. Logic, which had been the touchstone of his life, can sometimes lead one astray. While he cannot change the past, there is a man in Japan who will profit from Holmes’ new found emotional knowledge.

“Mr. Holmes is not a fast paced nail-biting mystery that will have you on the edge of your seat? Rather it is an unhurried and beautifully acted character study that rewards patience.

(Amazon Prime)