

SHERLOCK SAM

and the
COMIC BOOK
CAPER in
NEW YORK



**BONUS
STORY INSIDE**
The Stolen Egg
in Punggol Park

By
A.J.
LOW

SHERLOCK SAM and the COMIC BOOK CAPER in NEW YORK



SHER SAM

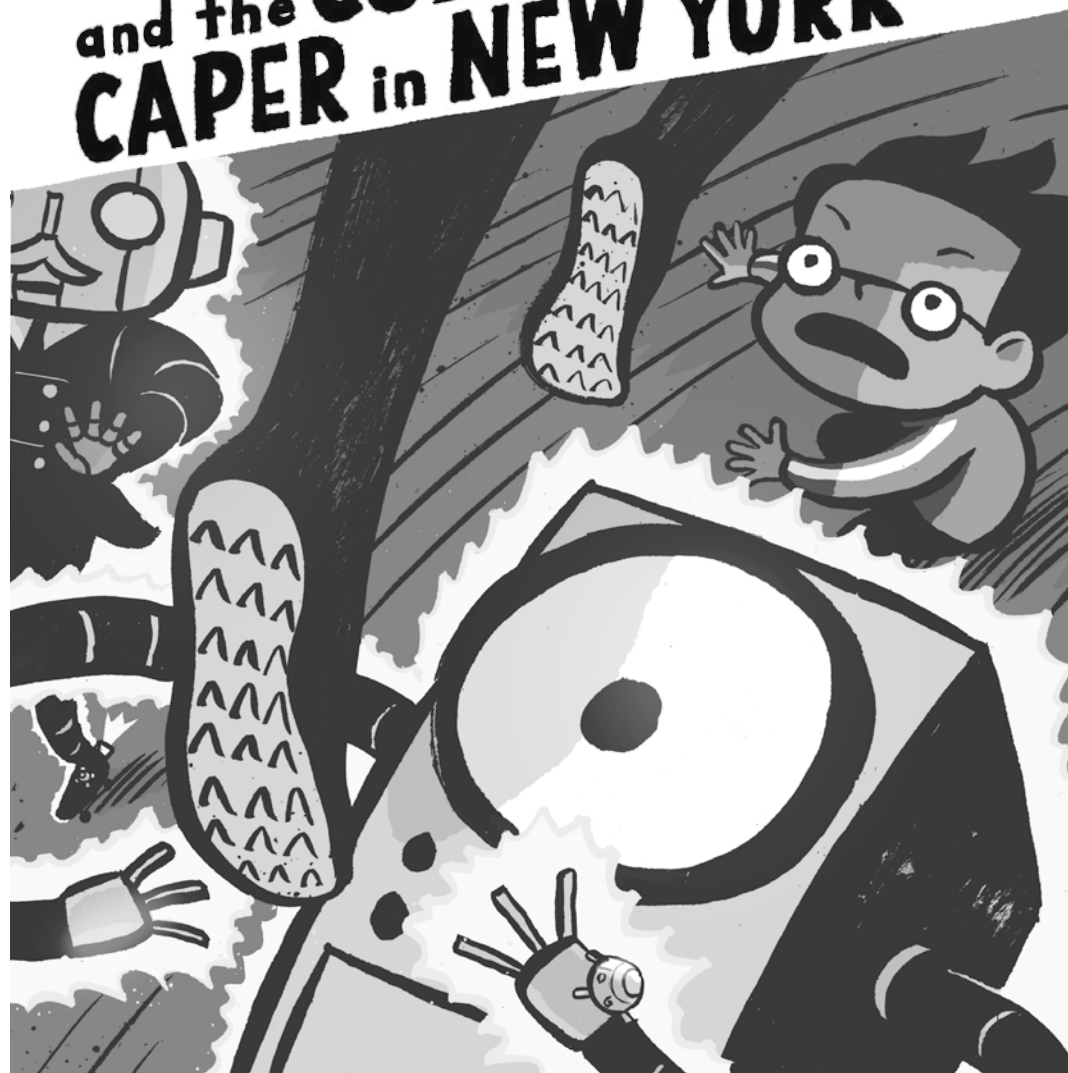
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LOCK

and the **COMIC BOOK**
CAPER in **NEW YORK**



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Sherlock Sam and the Missing Heirloom in Katong
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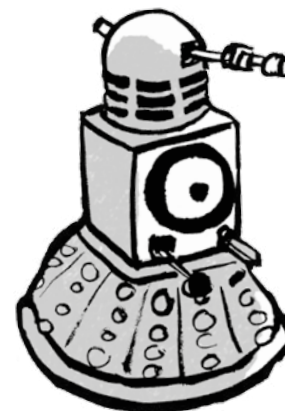
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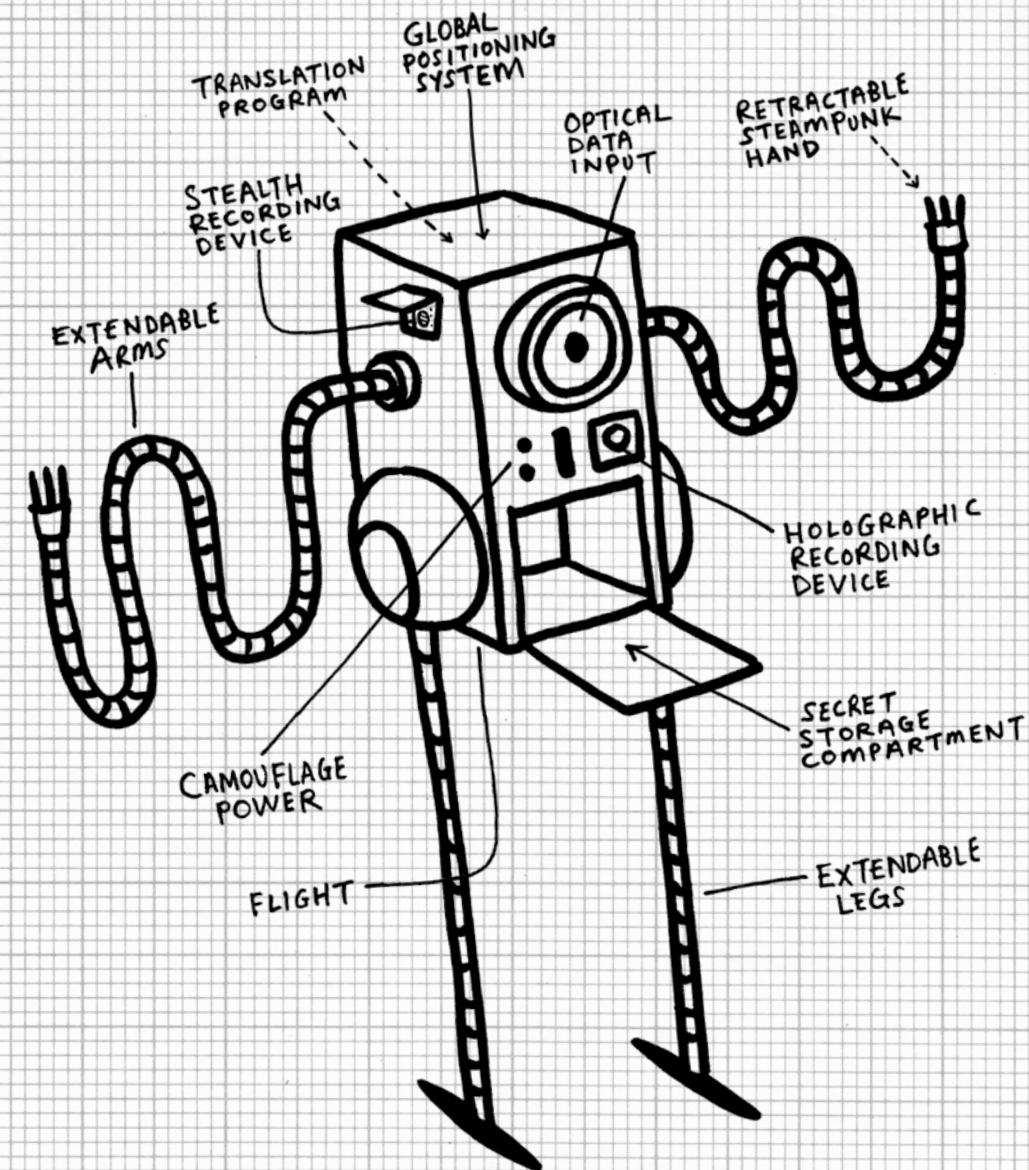
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**FOR ANYONE WHO HAS EVER
FELT LEFT OUT OR WEIRD.**

**Weird is cool, the way robots are cool.
This book is for superheroes like you.**

Also, to Jenn. Thank you. You know why.





CHAPTER ONE

"That-is-the-17th-Harley-Quinn-we-have-seen-today," Watson said, after I had posed for a picture with the cosplayer.

We were at the San Diego Comic-Con on Thursday, its first day, thanks to Inspector Lestrade. I had been helping her with cases since we worked together in Tokyo. The inspector would occasionally call and ask me random questions that oftentimes made very little sense. However, my answers usually

helped her make a connection on a case she was working on, and she would go on to solve it. As a thank you, she had flown all of us out to San Diego using an Interpol jet!

"I can't help it if they all want to take pictures with the cutest Batman they've ever seen," I said. I could almost hear Wendy's eyes roll.

And of course we dressed up. You can't go to the world's most famous pop culture convention and not cosplay. I was Batman, of course. Always be Batman. Wendy, my big sister, dressed up as the new Ms Marvel, a super awesome superhero. Eliza, her best friend, went as Squirrel Girl, complete with buck teeth and a bushy tail! Both her parents had helped her with the costume even though they weren't together anymore.

Watson, my grumpy robot, decided to dress up as a Dalek, though I had not approved of the choice. I didn't need him getting any more evil robot ideas. Moran, my arch-enemy's ex-

robot, chose the more sensible Data, though his fantastic moustache still stood out even after we helped paint him yellow.

Nazhar, my friend from Wendy's class, couldn't decide between the Kyle Rayner and Guy Gardner Green Lanterns. He ultimately chose Guy Gardner because he had the cooler uniform, but he didn't get Guy's trademark bowl haircut like I had urged him to.

Mom and Dad wanted to wear couple costumes, but couldn't decide on which couple to go as. Finally, they decided to turn the couple costume idea on its head and they both dressed up as Harrison Ford: Dad went as Indiana Jones while Mom chose Han Solo as her costume.

Jimmy, my best friend, chose to dress up as a somewhat obscure character. He went as Molly Hayes aka Princess Powerful, from the *Runaways* comic. When we asked him why he chose that character, he replied, "Because she's



10 years old like me, but she still helps fight the bad guys with her friends!" It made sense to us.

We couldn't wait to see what Inspector Lestrade would be dressed as. After seeing her impressive costume changes in Tokyo, we just knew she would have something incredible up her sleeve—if her costume had sleeves at all that is! We hadn't seen her yet, though. We were supposed to meet at Hall H for the unveiling of an amazing new technology by Dr Lynda Yeun. She had worked on the special effects for many of the new and hugely popular superhero movies. Some of the sophisticated CGI she helped develop were playing on the gigantic screens at the convention, complete with sound effects. It was fantastic! Everything Dr Yeun had worked on looked unbelievably real, especially the flying cars in some of the movies. I couldn't wait to ask her about the maths and science behind all the movie magic!

The reason why we got this opportunity was because Dad had met her previously at a meeting for engineers and scientists. So when she found out that we would be coming to the convention, she invited us to see her new top-secret tech. Normally, we wouldn't be able to get into Hall H without queueing for hours—because that's where they hold all the really big TV and movie events—but Dr Yeun got us special passes so we could bypass the line entirely. I was so excited!

Until then, however, we basked in the glory that was Comic-Con. I had already met Noelle Stevenson, writer and artist of the really cool *Lumberjanes* and *Nimona*. We were now on our way to see Gabriel Ba and Fabio Moon, the Brazilian creators responsible for great books like *Daytripper* and *Two Brothers*. They also happened to be twins!

"Their art is so great, Sam!" Wendy said. "I can't wait to meet them." It was possible she wanted to meet them more than I did.

"It doesn't hurt that they're really cute too, right, Wendy?" Mom said, nudging Wendy.

"What? No! Are they? I never even noticed the way their curly hair bounces on their heads or anything. Hey! What's that completely unrelated thing over there?" Wendy pointed at a stall selling gaming dice.

"Is something wrong with your internal temperature regulation, Miss Wendy?" Moran asked. "You have suddenly turned very red."

Mom laughed while Wendy hid under Eliza's squirrel tail.

I had no idea what was happening, but I did remember I needed new d20s.

We saw a person dressed as a ninja. Not a ninja character from any cartoon, comic or movie, but a historical ninja. When Nazhar heard the person say that, he very nearly launched into his "ninjas never existed" speech, but Eliza interrupted him.

"What about ghost ninjas?" she asked.

Nazhar stopped before he started, his mouth hanging open.

“Ninja *hantu*...” he whispered. “That changes everything...”

We wandered around the convention floor, marvelling at all the amazing stands and costumes, posing for photographs and buying a few comics (we couldn’t buy too many as we were already having some trouble closing our luggage), until it was time to meet Inspector Lestrade and Dr Yeun at Hall H.

When we arrived, we kept an eye out for the inspector. We had some fun guessing which elaborate costume she was hiding in. We thought she might have been a massive *World of Warcraft* orc, a TARDIS, an Optimus Prime, a Tali’Zorah or a Donatello, but they all passed us by.

Mom and Dad spotted Inspector Lestrade first, and we were completely shocked. The inspector had not dressed up at all!

“Hello, Inspector Lestrade,” I said. “Where is your Comic-Con costume? Are you waiting to put it on later?”

“What do you mean?” she asked in her French accent. “I am wearing it. I am dressed as myself. Is it not completely inconspicuous?” She beamed.

We didn’t know what to say. If ever her elaborate costumes could actually be inconspicuous, it would be at one of the largest gatherings of cosplayers in the world. But right now, she remained conspicuously inconspicuous. Officer Siva was right after all.

Mom changed the subject. “Thank you for this trip, Inspector. It was very thoughtful of you.”

“Yes,” Dad added, grinning. “And thanks to Interpol for letting us use one of their jets for a holiday!”

“That is not entirely true,” Inspector Lestrade said, dragging her words out.

My interest was piqued. "Is there a case for us to solve?" I asked.

"I-knew-this-was-too-good-to-be-true," Watson said. "I-should-have-stayed-at-home-in-my-robot-pyjamas."

"Non, non," the inspector said. "There is no case for you, but there may be a case for me." She asked us to huddle and continued in a whisper, "I'm sure you've heard of the superhero in New York, the one the newspapers have dubbed the Dark Defender."

I had heard of her. She had stopped quite a few muggings, carjackings and robberies since she first appeared a few months ago. But the extraordinary thing about her was that she did not seem to have any superhuman powers! She could be anyone! I thought she was very brave.

"Quack," Moran said.

"What?" I asked.

"Quack," Jimmy repeated flashing his huge Jimmy-smile.

"Dark, Jimmy," Eliza said. "Not Duck." She looked at Moran strangely, as did I.

"Then I'll be the Duck Defender, defending all duckies everywhere!" Jimmy replied, striking a pose. Moran quacked again.

The inspector looked at the both of them and blinked before continuing. "Yes. Quack. Very good. What was I saying? Oh yes, well, this is the first major comic convention since she started fighting crime, and I had a hunch that she would appear. How could she resist the opportunity to dress up, yes?"

Mom's brow furrowed. "That's a pretty wild hunch, Inspector. The United States is a very big country, and we're entirely on the wrong side of it to really expect her to show up."

New York City was in the northeast corner of the US, while San Diego was in the southwest. A person would have to fly seven hours to get from one city to the other.

"I didn't say it was a very good hunch, but

I've learned to trust my instincts," Inspector Lestrade said, looking at me with a small smile.

"Then it's very nice of Interpol to let us use one of their jets because of one of your hunches," Dad said, patting the inspector on her shoulder.

"Well, that's not entirely true either."

Mom and Dad paused and waited for her to explain further, but all the inspector did was hum a jaunty tune. Mom's eyes narrowed.

"Jimmy, why does Moran keep quacking?" I asked.

"It's his new power, Sherlock!" Jimmy replied. "Isn't it awesome? Watson helped me install it!"

If I didn't know any better, I could have sworn my robot grinned at me. But that was impossible, wasn't it?

"And what is the point of Moran's new... power?" I asked.

"He can talk to duckies!" Jimmy replied.

"Quack," Moran confirmed.

"This is all your doing," I said to my robot.

"I-do-not-understand-what-you-mean," Watson replied.

"I quite enjoy this new ability, Master Sherlock," Moran added.

"But it's not useful at all," I complained.

"Not everything needs to be useful, Sherlock!" Jimmy said. "Sometimes things can just be fun!"

I had to agree with that. But then I wondered what other "fun" abilities Watson had given Moran, and himself. I guess I would have to wait and see. I gave my robot another glare for good measure.

"Is he going to quack every single time we say Dark Defender?" Wendy asked.

"No-it-is-a-random-algorithm," Watson replied.

"What does that mean?" Eliza asked.

"It means Moran will quack whenever he

feels like it," I answered. I knew exactly how devious my robot could be.

"Hello, Mr Tan!"

Dad and Mom both spun around to look at the source of the greeting.

A slender woman in a lab coat walked towards us. She had long, black hair that was streaked with silver and almost reached her waist. When she got closer, I noticed she was a few centimetres taller than Mom and she looked very fit.

"Hello, Dr Yeun!" Dad said, lifting his arm up in greeting. "This is my wife Kathryn, and our children Samuel, Wendy and Watson. These are their friends Eliza, Nazhar, Jimmy and Moran, and this is Inspector Geneviève Lestrade with Interpol. She's a good friend!"

"What a lovely family!" Dr Yeun smiled. She gave the inspector a quizzical look, but didn't make any further comment. "Please, follow me. I want you to have the best seats in the house," she said.

As we walked behind her, I overheard her conversation with Dad.

"Michael, I've been reading about your research into teleport technology, and it is incredibly exciting," Dr Yeun said.

"Thank you, Lynda, but as you know, I've made some incorrect calculations regarding the quantum pairings. I've been having some trouble correcting them as I don't quite understand the mechanics behind it." Dad looked a little sheepish.

"Nonsense, Michael. We can't be expected to be experts in every field and mistakes are just chances for us to learn," Dr Yeun said. "Perhaps I can connect you with my assistant Julie. She is doing some brilliant work in quantum computing, and she might be able to help you. She's in New York at the moment, so I can't formally introduce you, but let's set up a call when you get back to Singapore."

"That would be great! Thank you so much, Lynda!"

"Not at all," Dr Yeun said. "But perhaps one day we can talk about how you built your amazing robots."

"Actually that was mostly my son," Dad said with a proud look in my direction. "All I did was, er, name him. Accidentally. Oh and the taller robot was built by a fiendish mastermind! But Sam sent him packing. Literally."

Dr Yeun looked startled and I saw Mom smother a laugh.

"I-like-to-think-we-were-already-amazing-and-our-creators-simply-gave-our-amazingness-a-form," Watson said. He stopped and looked at Moran, who nodded and added, "Indeed, Master Watson. We are perfection personified."

I just shook my head. Moran might live with Jimmy and his family, but he and Watson spent a lot of time together when we were in school

and I could definitely see signs that my robot was exerting his influence on the taller robot.

Dr Yeun led us to our seats, right at the front of the hall. Before we sat down, she gathered us close together.

"I'm about to unveil a technology very few people are aware of," she said with a glint in her eye.

"Is it another breakthrough in computer-generated graphics?" Wendy asked. "Your CGI is already the greatest and most realistic in the world, avoiding the uncanny valley entirely. It's a level of realism artists have been striving for since we first started painting on cave walls."

"Art nerd," Eliza said, smirking at Wendy.

"It's also the most sophisticated imaging programme in existence," I said. "Able to understand human speech to change aspects of a design without needing manual input, and without requiring a user to know even the most basic of programming languages. They

can simply say 'red hair' and the programme gives an avatar red hair just like that."

"Science nerd," Eliza said, aiming her good-natured smirk at my direction this time. She had been smiling a lot more this trip. I hope that meant that she was feeling better about her parents' recent divorce.

"And-it-makes-science-fiction-action-sequences-look-very-cool," Watson said.

Dr Yeun smiled. "I like your children very much, Michael. May I keep them as cheerleaders?"

"Their art and science supply requests would bankrupt you," Mom joked.

"And-that-is-not-even-counting-Sherlock's-food-bills," Watson said.

Dr Yeun laughed. I glared at Watson. "But to answer your question, no, it's not related to CGI at all. It's something I think you're going to find even cooler. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to get ready for the presentation."

She left and we all sat in our seats. The hall was packed, without a single empty seat, and everyone seemed super excited to be there. The lights dimmed and then turned off completely before a spotlight hit a green sedan car in the centre of the stage.

"My name is Dr Lynda Yeun, and I have helped to create some of the amazing movie magic that you love." It was Dr Yeun's crisp and clear voice over the sound system, but it sounded pre-recorded. The actual Dr Yeun was probably getting ready for her big entrance. The screen behind the green car ran a few action sequences from the superhero movies Dr Yeun had worked on, and the crowd erupted in wild cheers.

"That magic has mostly been made using the most sophisticated computer-generated graphics in history, but not always. At Yeun Technologies we have developed something new."

The crowd abruptly hushed as the car

turned itself on. I assumed it was being remote controlled, which was not a new technology, but perhaps Dr Yeun had done something new with it?

Suddenly, the crowd cheered again, louder than before, so it was difficult for me to hear Dr Yeun's pre-recorded voice when it restarted.

"We have developed the world's first Hover Car."

I finally saw why the crowd had begun cheering before Dr Yeun's announcement. The Dark Defender was on stage! She even appeared on the large TV screen! From where we were sitting, all I could see was that she was lean and looked lightly muscled in her full-black bodysuit. Her outfit also had a hood that was completely pulled over her head, shadowing her face. I caught a glimpse of a mask that obscured her eyes and nose. I also noticed that she was wearing functional black gloves and dark combat boots that were

streaked with dirt. Inspector Lestrade's hunch had been correct. I wondered how Dr Yeun had managed to get her to be part of the show.

The crowd was cheering madly as the Dark Defender leapt into the car in a single bound.

"The car has already been used in a few movies and TV shows, though we swore the cast and crews to secrecy until today." Dr Yeun's prerecorded voice continued its narration in a calm manner. It struck me as odd because it was completely not in line with what was happening on stage.

Right then, the car took flight. It lifted off the stage and flew over us. The crowd went mad! I couldn't believe my eyes. An actual flying car! I turned to look at the Supper Club and my parents, and everyone looked utterly stunned. Inspector Lestrade had her hands covering her mouth in shock.

"Yeun Technologies presents the Hover Car! Would you like a demonstration?"

The timing of the audio was definitely out of sync with what was happening, but no one seemed to care or perhaps they just couldn't hear her. I could barely hear Dr Yeun's voice over the roar of the audience.

The Dark Defender then flew the car upwards and crashed through a set of darkened windows at the very top of the stage area, letting in the sunlight. The shouts of excitement from the crowd were the loudest sounds I had ever heard in my entire life—it obscured the noise that the falling glass made as it hit the stage floor and shattered.

"Is that stunt glass?" I heard Nazhar shout at Wendy who winced and mimed at him that she couldn't understand what he was saying because everything else was deafening.

The crowd screamed even louder. Dr Yeun reappeared off-stage, her eyes huge and her lips tightly pressed together. To me, she looked oddly worried. I wondered why, since the



reception from the audience was incredible – it seemed like the performance she had arranged was going spectacularly well. She turned to look at Dad who was standing not too far away, but before she could say anything, two men ran up to her: a tall one with long, brownish hair, a moustache and beard, and a guitar strapped to his back, and the other slightly shorter with close-cropped black hair, glasses and a shiny suit. He had an axe strapped to his back. Comic-Con was awesome.

“Dr Yeun, that was amazing!” the taller man with the guitar said, grabbing on to her hand and shaking it vigorously. The doctor looked irritated for a brief moment, but she quickly recovered and smiled pleasantly.

“It really was! How did you get the Dark Defender to show up?” the shorter one with the axe asked. “We’ve been trying to get a hold of her to appear in comic book stores in New York. It has been impossible!”

Dr Yeun hesitated for a moment and then leaned conspiratorially closer. Her smile widened, but I noticed that it didn’t reach her eyes. “Thank you, Scott and Ku. But I’m sure you’ll understand that I can’t reveal all my secrets right away. However, I appreciate your strong support during Comic-Con and I promise we’ll talk soon.” With that, she turned and walked away to where Dad, Mom and Inspector Lestrade were. She had a quick word with Dad, and the grown-ups discreetly moved a slight distance away from us. Dad saw me watching and gave me a look over his shoulder that seemed to say, “Patience, young Padawan. All will be revealed soon.”

The two men grinned at each other and then the taller one rushed onto the stage. He grabbed a microphone and shouted, “How amazing was that? The Dark Defender, everyone!”

The crowd continued cheering, but we had stopped. My Spidey-senses were tingling.

Something was up. I gestured to the Supper Club that we needed to move closer to where the adults were.

Once we were close enough, I heard Dr Yeun quietly say, “Inspector, I need your help. My Hover Car has been stolen.”



CHAPTER TWO

Dr Yeun had confirmed what I had begun to suspect—the appearance of the famous Dark Defender was not a publicity stunt after all. I knew we needed more information on this mysterious superhero, and the two people who seemed to know the most about her were just coming off the main stage.

“C’mon, guys. We need to talk to them,” I said to the Supper Club, gesturing at the two men that Dr Yeun had referred to as Ku and

Scott. Dad, Mom and Inspector Lestrade were next to Dr Yeun, still deep in conversation. I knew that as long as we didn't wander too far, my parents would be okay with us questioning the two men. We quickly made our way forward and intercepted them before they could leave the area.

"Oh wow! Look at you guys!" the man with the glasses and axe said. "Your costumes are awesome!"

"Indeed they are," the taller man said, nodding. "Molly Hayes is one of my favourite characters." He gave a thumbs-up to Jimmy, who beamed.

"Hello, Mr Ku and Mr Scott," I said. I had automatically wanted to call them both Uncle, but from my research before the trip, I had learned that in America, kids didn't go around calling grown-ups "Uncles" or "Aunties". That was reserved primarily for family members. "My name is Sherlock Sam and I'm a —"

"Are you from Singapore?" Mr Ku interrupted. "I can recognise that accent anywhere in the world."



"Oh man, I love Singapore," Mr Scott said, nodding.

"Especially the chilli crab," Mr Ku continued looking excited, his axe wobbling against his back. "With deep fried *mantou*. Though the steamed ones are pretty good too."

I almost started to discuss the merits of eating chilli crab with steamed versus deep-fried *mantou* and where they could find the best chilli crab in Singapore, but Wendy coughed loudly and I was reminded of the questions that I wanted to ask the two men. I cleared my throat.

"Mister—" I started.

"You can drop the Mister, kid," Mr Scott said. "Scott and Ku are just fine."

"Er, Scott. Okay." It felt weird calling grown-ups by just their first names, but I had learnt that a good detective had to adapt quickly to situations. "My dad is friends with Dr Yeun and I couldn't help but overhear the both of you telling her about how you have been trying to get the Dark Defender to make appearances in comic book stores in New York?"

"Yeah, man. We knew that fans would love it, but we haven't been able to contact her publicity people at all," Scott said, shrugging. His guitar shifted slightly. Unlike Ku's axe, it looked real.

"Especially since Midtown Comics in New York started selling prints of her. They can't get them printed fast enough," Ku added.

"Prints, as in photographs?" Wendy asked.

Ku nodded.

"What makes you think she has publicity people?" Eliza asked, crossing her arms across her chest. Her bushy tail bobbed.

"We—well, er, I mean, well...that's actually a good question," Scott looked over at his friend. "Ku? A little help here?"

"Hurm. We just assumed...hmm... Good point," Ku replied, looking at Eliza. "I suppose you're too young for me to offer you a job?"

Eliza rolled her eyes, but I could have sworn that I saw a faint blush creep up in her cheeks.

Just then, I noticed Dad and Mom gesturing at us to come over. I quickly thanked Ku and Scott who rushed off muttering about what to do if the Dark Defender didn't in fact have marketing and publicity people. However, just before I reached my parents, something occurred to me. I turned and rushed back to



Ku and Scott and handed them my homemade business card. I also requested that they contact me if they found out how to get in touch with the Dark Defender. Both looked confused but nodded.

As we gathered around the grown-ups, Dad said, "Son, I think you're going to want to hear this."

Dr Yeun looked dubiously at me but then took a deep breath and straightened her shoulders.

Clearly, whatever Inspector Lestrade had said about the Supper Club had left an impression. Dr Yeun proceeded to confirm my suspicion that the Hover Car had in fact been stolen.

"I knew that glass looked too real to be stunt glass," Nazhar muttered under his breath.

"My cell has been ringing off the hook with messages and calls from our investors. They're extremely pleased to see the car in action and even more pleased to see the immense reaction from the crowd. Our social media has been exploding with positive comments," Dr Yeun said.

"But that's a good thing, right?" Wendy said.

"Not necessarily," I replied. "Especially since Dr Yeun doesn't actually know where the Hover Car is right now."

The professor nodded. "My investors are already talking about putting in more money to mass produce the car. If they found out that our prototype has been stolen..."

She trailed off. I could see her hands were clenched at her sides. One hand was clutching on to her cell phone, which was blinking and vibrating furiously with what had to be incoming calls and messages.

"Sam, Inspector Lestrade has been telling Dr Yeun about how you and your friends have been working with Interpol," Mom said.

"I would like to hire you as a Consulting Detective," Dr Yeun interrupted. "Inspector Lestrade speaks very highly of you and I obviously cannot go to the police with this. Not with my investors breathing down my neck and my competitors waiting in the wings." She paused and gave me a considering look. "What are your charges?"

I blinked.

I looked at Dad and Mom who looked back at me with wide eyes.

I blinked again.

I turned to look at Watson who used his

camouflage function to turn himself a deep green. Moran's compartment flipped open and he pulled out a scone, which he politely offered me. I almost automatically accepted the snack, but then thought better of it and retracted my hand. Jimmy took the scone instead. I admit, I felt a pang of regret.

Wendy, Eliza and Nazhar just shrugged. Jimmy scratched his head, which was covered with a wig, and continued chewing contemplatively.

What I charged? I had no idea. I had never been asked that before.

Then it hit me.

"A lifetime supply of deep fried chicken wings?"

"SAMUEL TAN CHER LOCK!" my mother and father exclaimed simultaneously.

Dr Yeun looked confused.

"What my son means to say, Dr Yeun," my mom said, glaring at me, "is that for a case as

important as this, he and his friends would be glad to help without charging any fees. Plus, we are here because of the generosity of Interpol, so it's only right that we assist Inspector Lestrade with her investigation of the Dark Defender."

"About that..." the inspector said, wrinkling her nose. She stopped when Mom looked at her. "Is something that we can discuss another time, yes?"

"If you're sure..." Dr Yeun said hesitantly.

"Yes, Dr Yeun," I replied. "It's a case with a superhero and a Hover Car. There's nothing that would keep us away from investigating this."

"Except-a-giant-plate-of-chicken-wings," Watson helpfully added. I was getting very good at ignoring my robot.

"In that case, I will email Inspector Lestrade with all the information I have on the car. I'll need to fly back first thing tomorrow morning to reassure my investors that all is well to avoid

any panic." She paused, then crouched down to look me in the eye. She put her hands on my shoulders and said, "Thank you, young man. I'll make this up to you somehow. A tour of our facilities perhaps—we do have some still-secret tech that I'm sure you will get a kick out of."

Standing up, she gave a quick smile to my parents before briskly walking away.

I was about to say something to Mom and Dad, but my tummy betrayed me. All the talk about chilli crabs, *mantou*, chicken wings and scones had made me hungry.

"Dinnertime, Sam?" Dad asked, grinning.

"Food fuels my detective brain," I replied, trying to look as serious as I could with a growling tummy.

Inspector Lestrade excused herself. She said she would need to check in with Interpol on any updates they had about the Dark Defender. What the supposed superhero had just done seemed highly out of character for

someone that had so far only performed good deeds. I secretly suspected that the inspector would appear in cosplay later while we were having dinner.

We all went to a Mexican restaurant called Tacos El Gordo that Nazhar had discovered during his extensive research of San Diego. It suddenly occurred to me that Nazhar was not glued to a guidebook that was flagged with multiple Post-its the way he was when we visited Tokyo. When I asked him why, he said that he was trying to learn to “go with the flow”. When I asked him what that meant he groaned and said he had no idea. But Jimmy, Wendy and Eliza had hidden his San Diego guidebook somewhere in school back in Singapore, and that was what they told him. Quietly, I offered to find it for him for one deep fried wing when we were back at school. We shook on the deal.

Tacos El Gordo, which loosely translated

to “Tacos From the Fat Guy”, according to Watson, was filled with people speaking a mix of Spanish and English. It didn’t look like a restaurant that was frequented by tourists, which was fantastic because it meant that the food would be inexpensive and authentic. People were queuing up in long lines, and behind the counter were rows and rows of grilling meats. The smell wafting over was utterly delicious.

Dad, Eliza, Watson and I queued to order while the rest of the Supper Club secured our seats. There were nine of us so we needed two booths that were preferably next to each other. Dad wanted to just leave tissue packets to *chope* our spots, but Mom said that she didn’t think that would work here. People only use tissue packets to reserve seats in Singapore, it seems.

The menu was written entirely in Spanish, but Watson, after much prodding, translated it into English for us using his translation

programme. It was one of the programmes he had installed in himself, and boy, was I glad for it. If he hadn't, I wouldn't have known I had the option to order beef *and* chicken in my tacos!

When we had collected all our food, we sat down and started to eat. The food tasted as delicious as it smelled!

Suddenly, Watson said, "I-have-made-a-breakthrough."

"Waugh?" I mumbled, my mouth full of deliciousness.

"There-has-been-a-sighting-of-an-unidentified-flying-object-heading-towards-New-York," Watson said.

"Wait, what?" I said, finally swallowing my mouthful of food and wiping my mouth with a napkin. "Where is your information coming from?"

"I-downloaded-an-air-traffic-controller-app," Watson replied. "It-taps-into-the-information-

that-air-traffic-controller-stations-receive."

"Wow. I didn't know such an app existed," Dad said. "That sounds spectacular!"

"I-learned-about-it-from-a-friend-who-loves-airplanes," Watson said.

Wait, Watson had friends besides us?

"What can the app do, Watson?" Jimmy asked.

"Listen," Watson said.

We all leaned in closer as indistinct chatter started emanating from my robot. Voices were giving instructions, directions and positions of airplanes! Watson must have been tuned into multiple frequencies because their voices were a jumble. Still, it sounded extremely complicated and utterly fascinating! Watson then adjusted the frequency so that only one voice remained.

"Yes. I have confirmation. An unidentified flying object spotted heading northeast over the San Diego Zoo. The altitude of the unidentified flying object does not interfere with any

current flight path. Repeat. The altitude of the unidentified flying object does not interfere with any current flight path. Over.”

“But it might not be the Hover Car,” I said to myself. After all, there was always the possibility of intelligent alien life. Nothing had been proven or disproven.

Watson’s speakers crackled to life once again.

“Er...unidentified flying object is shaped like a what? Repeat? Over,” the disembodied voice questioned. For the first time there was some emotion in the voice that we heard.

There was burst of static.

“A what? Repeat?”

More static.

“A flying car?!”

ABOUT THE CHARACTERS



SAMUEL TAN CHER LOCK a.k.a. SHERLOCK SAM

A 10-year-old detective who tends to bite off more than he can chew, Sherlock Sam loves superheroes and comics. His heroes are Sherlock Holmes, Batman, Agent Coulson and his dad. Exceptionally curious and intelligent, Sherlock cannot resist a perplexing mystery, not even when it can get him in trouble.



WATSON

Less than two years old, Watson behaves more like a grumpy old man though he has remarkable similarities to a sulky toddler. He is often reluctantly drawn into Sherlock's misadventures. Watson secretly wants to join S.H.I.E.L.D.'s Science division and create an army of like-minded robots.



WENDY

Wendy, Sherlock's 11-year-old sister, can be a tomboy. Her arch-nemeses are mosquitoes and broken colour pencils. She is a talented artist and her favourite colour is green. Her Chinese is terrible.



JIMMY

Sherlock's classmate, Jimmy, seems to have the super power to fall down without injuring himself. His enthusiasm for everything is infectious and no one can stay mad at him for long (that might be his other super power).



NAZHAR

Nazhar is a bookish boy who loves reading about history and is the big brother of the group. He is trying to learn more about the outdoors from Eliza but, unfortunately, Nazhar has a horrible sense of direction.



ELIZA

Eliza is an only child. Her parents have recently divorced which was very difficult for her. Though sometimes sarcastic and mean, Eliza has become a true ally of Sherlock Sam and a member of the Supper Club. She really loves *My Little Pony* and neat hair.



DAD

A brilliant engineer, Sherlock's dad is constantly working on top-secret experiments. He cannot concentrate unless he is chewing on Red Vines, a twisty liquorice candy. He has never stopped reading superhero comics because he thinks that everyone needs heroes, no matter how old they are.



MOM

Sherlock's mom is half-Peranakan and a genius in the kitchen. She loves reading books by Jane Austen and enjoys watching superhero movies more than she lets on—especially those featuring Black Widow.



OFFICER SIVA

Officer Siva is an experienced and insightful police officer with the Singapore Police Force, but he cannot work without his morning *kopi*. A trusted ally of Sherlock Sam, Officer Siva is studying Spanish because he's addicted to *telenovelas*. He hopes they'll be the new Korean dramas in Singapore.



MORAN

Moran used to belong to the Fiendish Mastermind, but now lives with Jimmy, his sisters, his Mama, and Auntie Gina. Unlike Watson's robotic voice, Moran sounds almost human. He also has an amazing moustache.



INSPECTOR GENEVIÈVE LESTRADE

A somewhat unorthodox INTERPOL agent from France who loves to cosplay randomly. Officer Siva calls her "conspicuously inconspicuous". Some of her previous costumes include: fire hydrant, mini-Eiffel Tower, and bakery shop.



THE DARK DEFENDER

Not much is known about the Dark Defender except that she appears at night to help victims of crime. She dresses all in black, and her secret identity is unknown to all except Sherlock Sam. She is very smart and well trained.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

A.J. Low is a husband-and-wife writing team!

Adan Jimenez was born in the San Joaquin Valley in California to Mexican immigrant parents. He became an immigrant himself when he moved to Singapore after living in New York for almost a decade. He has worked for comic book stores, book stores, gaming stores and even a hoagie sandwich shop once. He loves comics, LEGOs, books, games (analog and video), Doctor Who and sandwiches.

Felicia Low-Jimenez has been a geeky bookseller for most of her adult life. She has bought books, sold books, marketed books and now she is trying her hand at writing books. She loves to nap and eat chocolate. She spends most of her free time reading, and, when she can afford it, she travels, usually to look for beautiful bookstores around the world.

Sherlock Sam and the Missing Heirloom in Katong won the International Schools Libraries Network's Red Dot Award 2013-2014 in the Younger Readers' Category. *Sherlock Sam and the Ghostly Moans in Fort Canning* took third place in the Popular Readers' Choice Awards 2013 in the English Children's Books category.

You can find them at sherlocksam.wordpress.com, facebook.com/SherlockSamSeries and sherlock.sam.sg@gmail.com

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

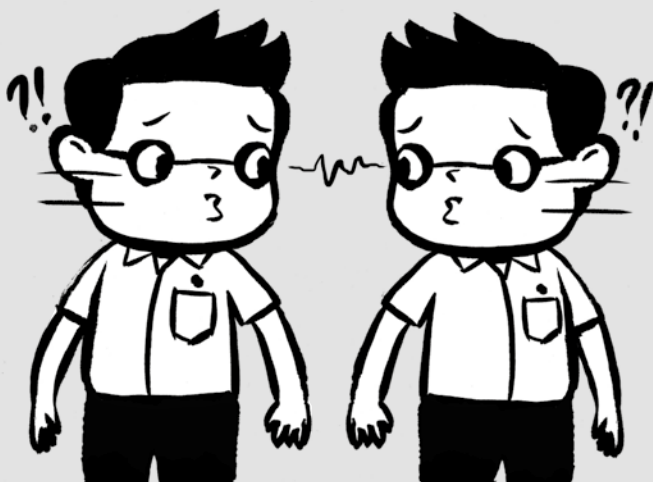
Andrew Tan (also known as Drewscape) is a full-time freelance illustrator and an Eisner-nominated comic artist. He illustrates for print ads, magazines and also enjoys storyboarding and illustrating for picture book projects. During his free time, he's always creating his own comics for the fun of it. In his home studio you'll find an overflow of art tools of all kinds as he loves experimenting with them. He already has too many fountain pens and tells himself that he will stop buying more. Andrew published his first graphic novel, *Monsters, Miracles & Mayonnaise*, in 2012.

QUANDARY IN QUEENSTOWN AND ADVENTURES IN ALTERNATE DIMENSIONS!

Look out for the next two books in the Sherlock Sam series as the adventures of the Supper Club continue!

In *Sherlock Sam and the Quantum Pair in Queenstown*, strange and impossible phenomena manifest near Dad's office. The Supper Club is immediately activated and Sherlock suspects that the weirdness is caused by alternate realities bleeding into his own. Can Sherlock, Watson, and the rest of the Supper Club stop worlds from colliding? Or will they face a crisis of infinite Watsons spouting sarcasm everywhere they turn? Find out in the next exciting exploit of Sherlock Sam!

In *Sherlock Sam's Orange Shorts*, you'll get a glimpse at some of these alternate realities yourself, as we visit different versions of the gang throughout space and time, from Ōnāy-359 and an Ancient Land That Was Not China to the town of Tumbleweed and a Place That Is Not on Any Map. See Nazhar, Moran, Wendy, Mom and Dad, Officer Siva and Inspector Lestrade, Jimmy, Eliza, Watson, and Sherlock Sam as you've never seen them before! Will Sherlock's orange shorts escape unscathed?!



Members of the Supper Club are attending the San Diego Comic-Con when a piece of experimental technology is stolen by a real-life superhero turned real-life supervillain! Sherlock Sam, Watson and the rest of the gang rush across the country to rescue the priceless technology from the clutches of this evil-doer. Fail and it could mean the end of the world as we know it.



"The one thing the mystery genre was missing, it turns out, was a wise-acre robot sidekick.

This is the book you've been looking for."

—HAL JOHNSON, author of *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods*

WINNER OF THE RED DOT AWARD 2013-2014



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