

SHERLOCK SAM

and the
MYSTERIOUS
MASTERMIND
in SEOUL



The Battle of the
BRAINS
DUOLOGY
BOOK 2

By
A.J.
LOW

“One of my favourite *Sherlock Sam* books so far! I really liked learning about Seoul and solving the Mysterious Mastermind’s clues, and couldn’t wait to find out how Watson and Moran would return to their own bodies. I also had fun making a *ddakji* and throwing it like a frisbee!”

ANYA, 8, WANTS TO BE A SCIENTIST

“I enjoyed reading how the Supper Club went around Seoul solving the different puzzles and uncovering the identity of the Mysterious Mastermind. I even made a *ddakji* and played with my parents. Reading *Sherlock Sam and the Mysterious Mastermind in Seoul* makes me want to visit Korea and try out different delicious Korean foods.”

KAELYN, 9, WANTS TO BE AN ARTIST

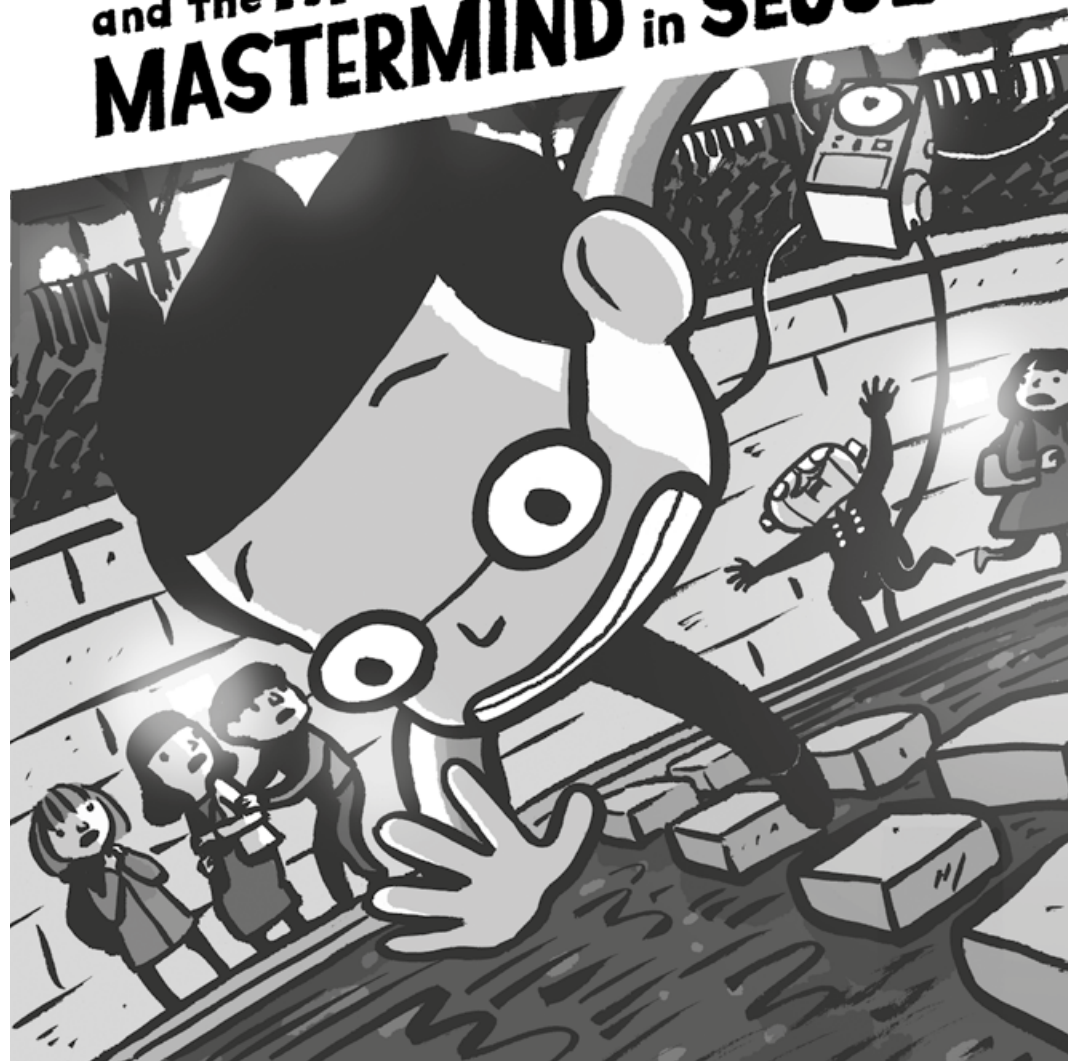
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LOCK

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MASTERMIND in SEOUL



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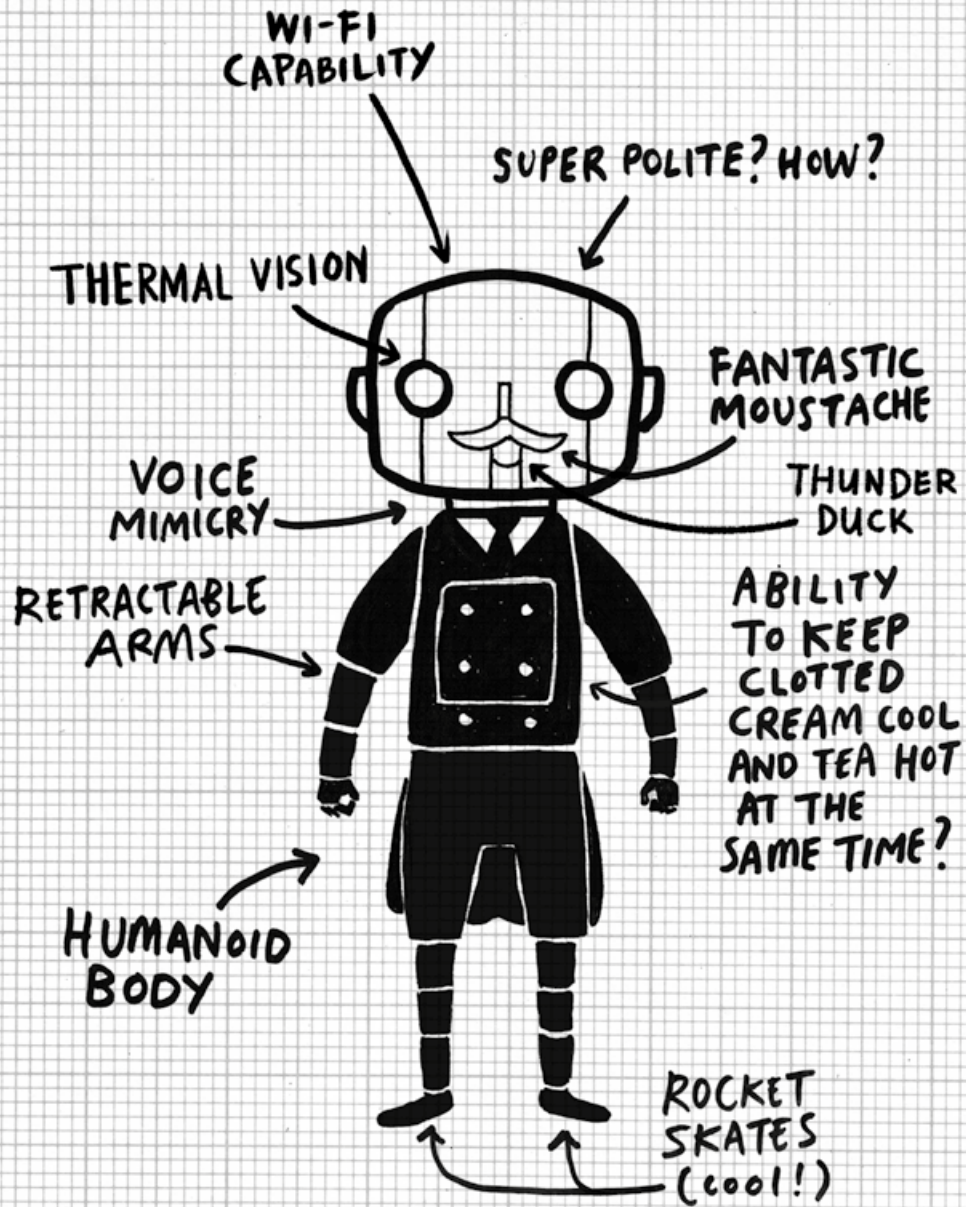
This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

First Edition 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To the cast and crew of *Running Man*,
who inspired this book. You guys have been
running and playing ridiculous games for
eight years, and we thank you very much for
always being hilarious and entertaining.
Kamsahamnida!

Also for Wen Yeu. Thank you for your
hard work on the *Sherlock Sam* series!
All the best for your next adventure.





CHAPTER ONE

"I'm going to call it MEGA-TECHNO-DESTRO-BOT," I said.

"I like Speeder," Dad replied. "Or maybe Spider. But wait, spiders are scary. This isn't going to be something that's scary. This will be a fun, sweet robot that will have the personality of a cute puppy."

"Spiders aren't scary, Dad," Wendy, my big sister, said. She was sprawled out on the couch behind us, sketching. "They are probably more afraid of you than you are of them."

"Then why do you carry bug spray with you all the time, Wendy?" I asked with as wide-eyed a look at possible, just to bug her.

"Because mosquitoes are EVIL," she said with a glare, going back to her work.

Dad and I had been working on a homemade robot for months now. We had gathered unused parts from some of Dad's engineering projects, as well as some stuff that we had at home, and were building our very own robot from scratch.

"Are you sure you want to use that, Sam?" Mom asked, walking into the living room from the kitchen where she had been experimenting with molecular gastronomy again. "That transistor radio is really old. It's been around since I was a kid and hasn't worked in years."

"It'll be fine, Mom. Old parts are good because they're made to last," I replied, distracted by a wire that was refusing to coil properly. Despite what I had just told Mom, this robot was filled with particularly stubborn parts that needed a lot of



cajoling and coaxing before they would do what I wanted them to do.

"Tell that to my knees, son," Dad said with a groan as he stood up and stretched, causing Mom to snicker.

"How much longer do you think you'll need before the robot is up and running?" Mom asked.

"Because I could really use some help with my Chinese homework," Wendy said with a grin. Both my parents turned and gave her the look that parents always gave misbehaving children. Her grin only got wider.

"Not much longer, I think," Dad replied, looking at me. "Right, son?"

"...." I replied. I was on my hands and knees and my head was almost fully inside the robot's rectangular torso. I thought the idea to build a secret compartment where its tummy should be was a brilliant one – who knew when a snack attack would hit? Then it would be super handy to have stashes of Khong Guan Biscuits around.

"What, son?" Dad asked. "I can't hear you."

I pulled my head out and sat back on the floor. "I think it'll be functional in less than a month? Programming its personality will probably take the most time."

"It'll have a personality?" Wendy asked, looking intrigued. "Like...WALL-E?"

"Possibly," I replied. "The reason why Dad and I are creating a robot is because we thought it would be able to help us. We're programming it to learn, so with machine learning it will be able to teach itself how to become more intelligent."

"Machine learning? Like using a computer? How can a machine learn?" Wendy asked, her eyebrows raised.

"It'll use all the data it's gathered to get better and better at the tasks we give it, hence the 'learning'," Dad replied.

"So if you taught it to take over the world and eradicate the need for Chinese homework..." Wendy said.

“Erm, hopefully, we won’t be teaching it how to take over the world. Right, Sam?” Dad answered.

“Huh? What?” I replied, once again battling with a particularly stubborn bit of circuitry. This robot was turning out to be more challenging than I had initially thought.

“Well, don’t say I didn’t warn you guys about using the old parts,” Mom said with a smile before she wandered back to the kitchen from where suspicious sounds were emanating.

I thought Mom was being overly pessimistic. What’s the worst that could happen?

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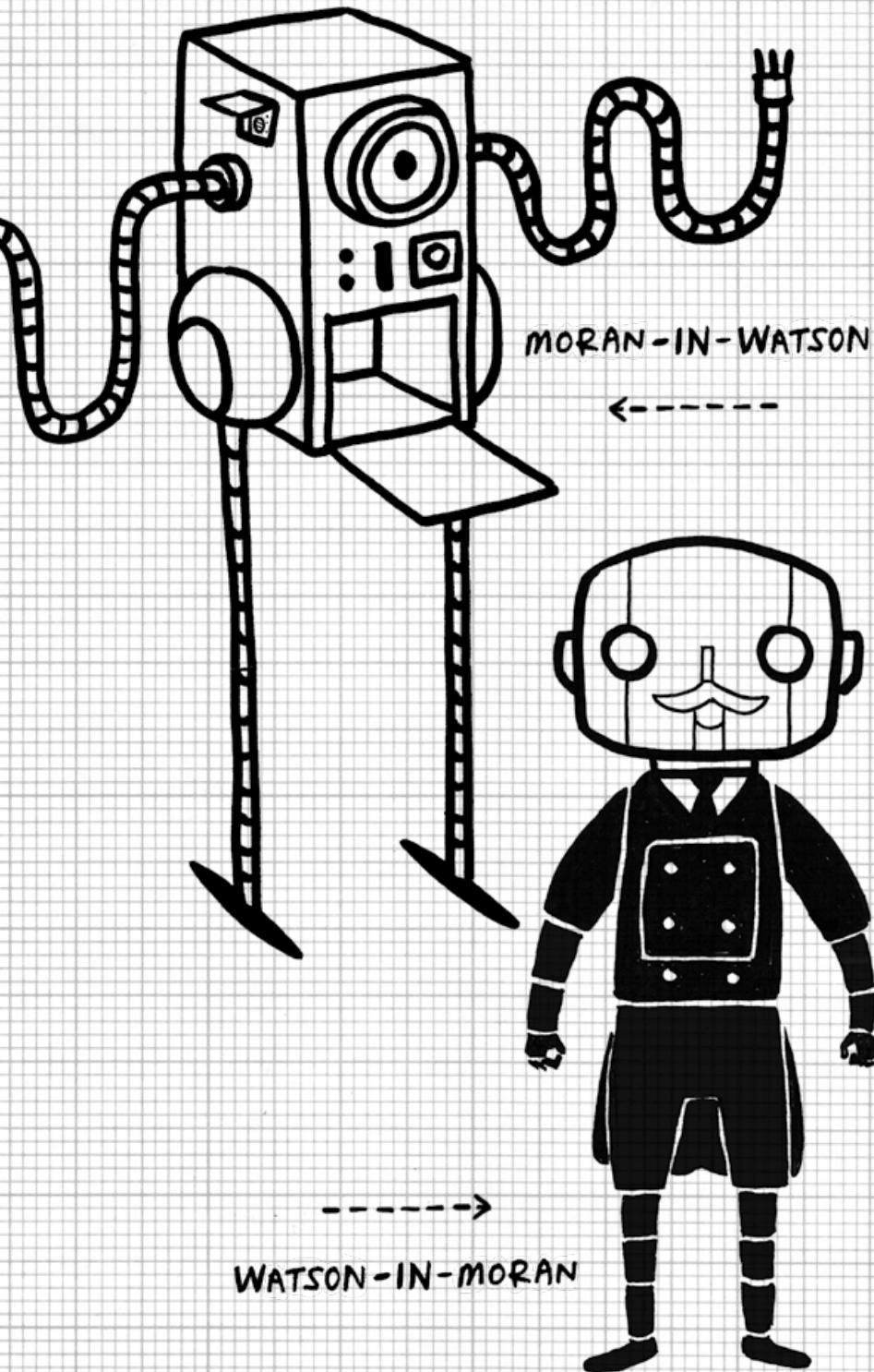
“I-refuse-to-serve-anyone-scones-or-tea,” Mora—no, not Moran—Watson, Watson said. It was disconcerting to hear Watson’s voice coming out of Moran’s body.

We were en route to Seoul after the Mysterious Mastermind, Kim Bok Joo (not her real name, hence the mystery behind her mastermind-ness),

unceremoniously informed us that not only had she bested us in London with her evil genius, she had also made it impossible for us to head home to Singapore after we had wrapped up the case in the UK. Somehow, using a technique that Dad and I were not able to figure out, she had swapped Watson’s and Moran’s personalities. We didn’t want to mess around with their programming too much because she might have put a booby trap in the code, so us fiddling with it might have serious repercussions. Right now, Watson was inhabiting Moran’s dignified physical body and Moran was trapped in a grumpy box-shaped robot.

“I could assist you, Master Watson, if you would like,” Moran-in-Watson replied.

“Wow, that is really weird,” Wendy said, staring at the two robots. “‘Watson’s’ being all polite. It’s so creepy.” Jimmy, Nazhar and Eliza nodded. Nazhar kept fidgeting with his glasses and Jimmy looked spooked.



Mom, Dad and Officer Siva stood around us, talking quietly amongst themselves. I could tell that they were gravely concerned with the situation.

"I-have-always-been-polite," Watson-in-Moran answered. "Also-I-can-now-say-with-absolute-certainty-that-I-am-a-very-good-looking-robot." He was looking straight at the rectangular form that Moran was now inhabiting.

"I've spoken to the pilot about our 'reward trip' to Seoul," Inspector Lestrade said as she made her way back to the cabin from the pilot's cockpit.

"What reward trip?" Eliza asked, crossing her arms across her chest.

"You know, the one I just came up with for all of you. To reward you for solving the Case of the Fiendish Heist in London. It is a clever idea, yes?" the Inspector replied, looking innocent.

Mom stared at her. I could see the gears in my mother's brain working. But then she blinked and decided against saying anything. She thought of Watson and Moran as family and wanted them to be returned safely to their respective bodies.

"Are the both of you able to access all the functions of your current physical bodies?" I asked Watson and Moran.

Both robots were silent for a moment.

"I-now-understand-how-Moran-is-able-to-keep-the-scones-warm-but-the-cream-chilled," Watson-in-Moran replied. "And-he-has-an-extensive-recipe-database-that-I-can-access. Interesting..." my robot trailed off.

"What? What's interesting?" I asked. Had Watson figured out a way to switch their personalities back? Did we not have to fly to Seoul after all? Would I never know what *gimbap* made in Korea tasted like?

"Moran-is-also-creating-new-recipes-based-

on-what-Auntie-Kim-Lian-and-Auntie-Gina-have-taught-him."

"Oh yes, Master Watson, it is also part of my programming to learn," Moran-in-Watson replied. "But I have to say that my programming is not as advanced as yours in this case."

"What? What do you mean by that, Moran?" I asked, turning to look with suspicion at my robot (not Watson's physical form, but at him, in Moran).

"Well, Master Watson has created many new subroutines and functions that were not in his original programming," Moran replied. He suddenly paused, then asked, "What is a Sherlockbot?"

"A what?" Wendy asked.

"A—" Moran started to answer.

"That-is-not-important," Watson-in-Moran interjected. "What-is-important-is-how-we-resolve-the-situation-so-that-Moran-

and-I-can-return-to-our-respective-bodies. Robots-deserve-privacy-too.” If I didn’t know any better, I would have said that Moran’s moustache looked somewhat nervous. Though I guess it was actually Watson’s moustache at the moment.

“Watson’s right,” Officer Siva said. “Our priority needs to be locating the mastermind formally known as Kim Bok Joo and apprehending her.”

“That’ll be hard given that she holds all the cards now, Officer Siva,” Nazhar said.

My friend was right. The Mysterious Mastermind was ahead of us. We had no choice but to play by her rules. I just hoped that we weren’t too late.

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CHAPTER TWO



“The first game I have for you will be waiting at Video Game Alley,” the Mysterious Mastermind announced imperiously.

She was once again in holographic form, appearing to us via Watson’s projector. When she glanced in my direction, it was almost as if she were looking straight through me. It was uncanny.

We had arrived at Incheon Airport, where we had cleared customs and were gathered in a quiet

corner of the airport (which was no mean feat because it was an extremely busy place). Moran-in-Watson had informed us that he had received a message from Bok Joo. She said that she would be appearing to us and that we should find a spot that wouldn't attract too much attention – if we knew what was good for us.

“What do we call her now, Sam?” Wendy whispered to me. “We know her real name isn't Bok Joo.”

“T.M.F.K.A.K.B.J.,” Jimmy whispered in reply.

“What?” my sister asked.

“The mastermind formally known as Kim Bok Joo,” Eliza answered, trying really hard not to laugh. “He told me all about this on the flight here.”

“Am I boring all of you?” T.M.F.K.A.K.B.J. asked, lifting an eyebrow.

“Not at all,” I replied. “We were just wondering what we should call you now since we don't know your real name.” She

was too smart to slip up, but I had to try.

“You may still call me Bok Joo,” she replied with a smirk. “I've grown quite fond of the name, actually. And did you really think I would fall for such an amateurish attempt to trick me, Sherlock Sam? I'm disappointed. Surely we play at a much higher level than that.”

I shrugged. “I just wanted to know how we should refer to you. As you know, I dislike inaccuracies.”

“Right,” Bok Joo replied. “Anyway, as I was saying, the first game I have devised for you is at Video Game Alley. There's a van with a driver waiting outside Exit 3 for you. We'll chat again once you're all safely inside.”

And with that, she vanished.

“What's a video game alley?” Jimmy asked looking at Dad.

“Oh, I can't look that up. I don't have data roaming in Seoul,” Dad replied, fiddling with his mobile phone.

“I should get a guide book,” Nazhar said, wringing his hands. “If I had a guide book, I could look it up, but I didn’t know we were coming to Seoul so I didn’t get one. But wait, I don’t have any Post-Its either. What’s the point of a guide book without Post-Its?!”

Mom placed her hand on Nazhar’s shoulder and squeezed gently. My friend looked up at her, then down at his feet.

Mom had called everyone’s parents, including Nazhar’s father, who gave his permission for Nazhar to come with us. However, I knew Nazhar was feeling nervous because he had never been away from his dad for such a long time. Since it was just the two of them, they were especially close and Nazhar felt bad for being away from his dad for too long.

“I think I saw some tourist maps in English near where the bus counters were, Nazhar,” I said. “We’ll make sure to pick some up before we leave.”

Nazhar looked at me, pushed his glasses more firmly up his face, and nodded.

“From what I can tell,” Officer Siva replied, looking at his phone, “it’s part of something called the Yongsan Electronics Market.”

“Maybe-it-is-an-alley-that’s-filled-with-video-games,” Watson said, his Moran-expression suspiciously blank.

“Do you think she wants us to play video games, Sam?” Wendy asked. “Because I would win at *Splatoon*.”

“*LEGO Dimensions!*” piped in Jimmy. “Or *Sonic the Hedgehog!*”

“I’ve gotten really good at *Horizon: Zero Dawn* after Nazhar invited me to play. Did you know the red grass acts as a camouflage for the main character because she has red hair? That’s so absurd, it’s genius,” Eliza said, flicking her braids behind her shoulders.

“We should head towards the exit Ms Kim indicated and get in the waiting van, no?”

Inspector Lestrade commented.

Mom, Dad and Officer Siva nodded.

As soon as we started walking, Moran-in-Watson tripped over a small step and landed on his face.

“Oh, I am terribly sorry,” he said, getting back up. “Master Watson, I really do not understand how you get around with no depth perception. Having only one eye is quite difficult for me.”

“It-is-an-acquired-skill,” Watson-in-Moran said. “And-an-oversight-by-my-creator.”

I frowned at him. I just thought he’d look cooler with one eye.

The weather was still quite chilly in March, so I felt cold the minute we stepped out of the airport. Luckily, we immediately spotted a man dressed in black holding up a card that read: “Welcome to Seoul, Supper Club”.

“That must be our ride, son,” Dad said, pointing.

We got into the van and the driver started to move off.

We tried asking him questions but he remained utterly silent. We even attempted to speak to the driver in Korean using the translation program in Watson’s body, but to no avail. Moran was much more willing to assist us than Watson would have been, although when we pointed this out to Watson, he firmly denied it.

“Bok Joo must have given him strict instructions not to answer any of our questions,” Nazhar said.

I agreed. I would have done the same if I were her.

Just then, Watson’s holographic projector sparked to life. Once again, Bok Joo appeared, larger than life, right in front of us.

“Is everyone comfortable?” she asked, looking around. Without waiting for a reply, she continued. “First, the rules. Robots and anyone

above 12 will not be allowed to participate in my games. You can observe, but if you assist in any way, the game is forfeit and you will not receive any clues."

"What do you mean by clues?" I asked.

"Clues to my whereabouts, Sherlock," Bok Joo replied. "After all, the entire point of this game is to battle wits, isn't it? It wouldn't be fair of me to make you participate in a game that wouldn't benefit your cause to fix your robots, would it?"

"So, what you're saying is that if we win at your games, you'll give us clues to find you?" I said.

"Yes. And if you succeed, I will fix both robots and hand myself over to your two police officers with no fuss. I'll even give you my father's contact information so that you will be able to get in touch with him since I'm a minor."

She was precise and logical, and I had to admire that.

"Why should we trust you?" Wendy said, frowning. Out of everyone, Wendy had spent the most time with Bok Joo while we were in London. She likely also felt the most betrayed when Bok Joo turned against us.

"Because, unlike James, this is all a game to me. If you win, you get the prize. If I win, well, there's no real harm done other than you guys getting used to your robots in different forms. There's no actual crime."

"It-is-a-crime-for-me-to-not-be-in-my-own-body," Watson-in-Moran said.

"I agree," Moran-in-Watson added.

"Perhaps, but you're not real people, are you? And our laws haven't yet caught up to technological advances. So, really, the stakes aren't all that high. For me, at least," Bok Joo laughed, flipping her long black hair behind her shoulder.

"Watson and Moran are real people to us," Nazhar said. "They're family."

Bok Joo paused and looked straight at Officer Siva, completely ignoring Nazhar. I thought that was odd. Perhaps she was waiting for him or Inspector Lestrade to comment on her crimeless game? She then she tilted her head and said, "Well then, we'd best get moving, shall we? At the end of every game, there will be a loser. The loser and someone above 12 will have to leave the group."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"They won't be able to participate or observe any longer. The point of the game is to cull members from your team until eventually, I'm assuming, it'll just be the strongest member versus me. I hope that person will be you, Sherlock," Bok Joo said.

"I bet it will be Jimmy," Wendy whispered. "Because Jimmy wins weird things all the time."

"It's true, remember that time I won the giant bar of chocolate just by sneezing?"

It was amazing!" Jimmy replied.

"And remember, because I can see everything you're doing, I will know if you're rigging the games so that Sherlock wins everything and is the last member standing," Bok Joo continued. "The games have to be played fair and square or they will be forfeit. The consequences of that, as you well know, will not be pleasant for your robots."

"Jimmy also won that race when he rolled down the hill after tripping into that hole, remember?" Nazhar added, as if Bok Joo hadn't spoken. She narrowed her eyes.

"Your team clearly lacks focus, Sherlock," the Mysterious Mastermind commented, "but that might help you in the next ten minutes or so."

"Meaning?" Eliza asked.

"We're going to play a little bonus game. No one will be cut after this game," Bok Joo said.

"Okay, what's the game?" Wendy asked.

"It's called the *Meong* Game. At least that's what I call it, but you can think of it as the Nonsense Game."

"The what?" I asked.

"The Nonsense Game, Sherlock," Bok Joo replied. "I'll ask you questions and the replies that you give me have to make absolutely no sense whatsoever."

"You mean they need to make sense," I said.

"No, they can't make sense," Bok Joo answered.

"But that makes no sense," I replied.

"Exactly," she said.

"What?" I said.

There was a moment of silence in the van.

"So we're supposed to answer with nonsense?" Jimmy asked. His eyes were bright and shiny. "I can do that!"

"Wow. It's like a game made for Jimmy," Dad whispered to Mom, who nodded.

"Are grown-ups not allowed to play this

too?" Inspector Lestrade asked. "I am asking because it seems like a fun game. Not that I am enjoying this situation at all of course. It is merely an observation."

"Grown-ups and robots are not allowed to play. We'll start with Jimmy, then Nazhar, Wendy, Eliza, and lastly Sherlock. Remember, *all* of you need to get the answers right or you won't get the clue," Bok Joo said.

"You mean get the answers wrong," Wendy said.

"Right," Bok Joo replied.

"Wait," my sister said, frowning her brow.

"No, let's not start this again," Eliza muttered under her breath.

"No, no, I got it. I just forgot who is supposed to go first," Wendy said. "Can we just sit in the right order so we don't get confused?"

Bok Joo was silent for a moment, then she nodded.

I gave my sister a thumbs up as we shifted

our respective seats. Watson's form remained in front so that Moran could continue to project Bok Joo's hologram, but the grown-ups and Watson-in-Moran shifted to the last rows. Wendy's suggestion was excellent. The last thing we needed was to mess up by answering in the wrong sequence. Bok Joo must have thought of that when she called our names out in that particular order. I was just surprised



that she gave in to Wendy's request so easily.

"First question to Jimmy," Bok Joo said, "What is your favourite colour?"

"Chickens are people too!" Jimmy shouted. He grinned triumphantly.

"What is the first thing you do every morning?"

"Er, er, ninjas aren't real!" Nazhar said. He slumped in his seat in relief after.

"Who do you like more, your mother or your father?"

"Data roaming is expensive!" Wendy cried. Dad immediately nodded.

"Who is your favourite actor?"

"The sun is brighter than the moon," Eliza replied, deadpan as always.

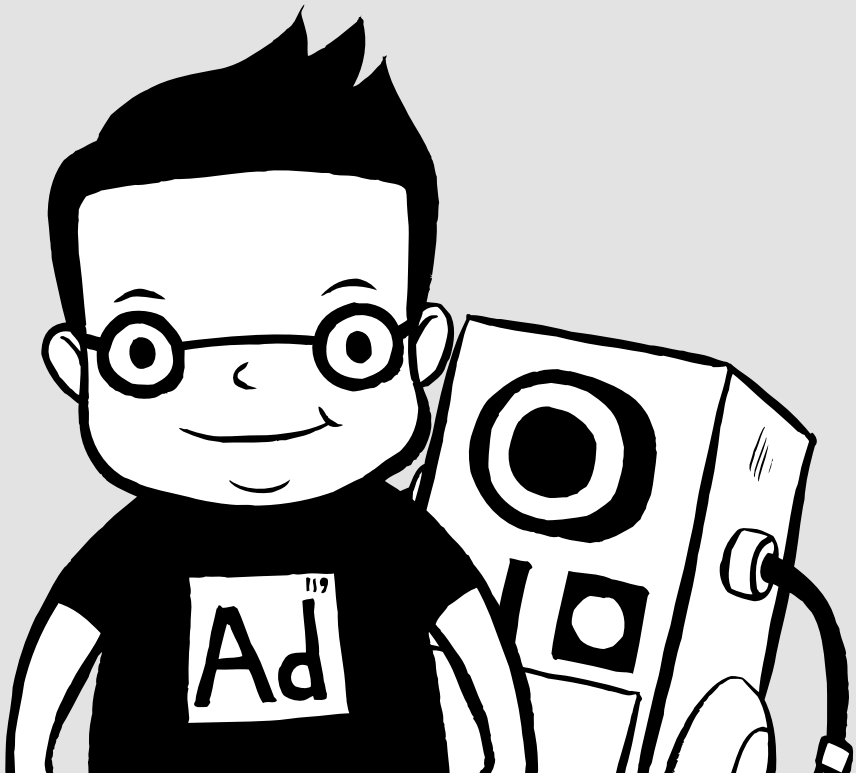
"What is four plus two?"

I was going to reply, but then I wondered if it was a trick question. Was I supposed to say 42? No, wait, I wasn't supposed to give the right answer. So I *should* say 42 and not six. Or was I

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In *Sherlock Sam and the Burgled Book in Kampong Glam*, a rare manuscript is stolen from a bookstore, and Nazhar's dad is the main suspect! Officer Siva tells the Supper Club they can't investigate, but that's never stopped Sherlock and his friends before. Will they prove Nazhar's dad's innocence and catch the true culprits? Or will they be perplexed by the puzzling pilferers? Find out in Sherlock Sam's next exciting adventure!



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“I like how this latest *Sherlock Sam* is set in Seoul and that it cleverly incorporates recognisable K-culture elements into the storyline. (P. S. Gong Yoo is definitely cuter.)”

—EMMA JOY, 11, WANTS TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR



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