



LoveReading4kids.co.uk
is a book website
created for parents and
children to make
choosing books easy
and fun

Opening extract from
**The Great Shelby Holmes Girl
Detective**

Written by
Elizabeth Eulberg

Illustrated by
Matt Robertson

Published by
**Bloomsbury Children's an imprint
of Bloomsbury Publishing PLC**

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Bloomsbury Publishing, London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi and Sydney

First published in Great Britain in January 2017 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DP

www.bloomsbury.com

BLOOMSBURY is a registered trademark of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

Text copyright © Elizabeth Eulberg 2017
Illustrations copyright © Matt Robertson 2017

The moral rights of the author and illustrator have been asserted

All rights reserved
No part of this publication may be reproduced or
transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying
or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 4088 7147 8



Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk
Printed and bound in Great Britain by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2



CHAPTER ONE

Every writer needs a good story to tell.

So here was my problem: I had nothing to write about because nothing exciting had ever happened to me. Seriously, nothing. Zip. Zilch. Nada. Diddly-squat. You'd think that someone who grew up on four different army posts in eleven years would've witnessed *at least one* exciting thing. Yeah, you'd think.

Nope.

My life = boring.

Then we moved from Maryland to New York City, and my new neighbour tried to blow up the building.

Sure, it all started like your average moving day for the Watson family. I'd got used to the constant packing and unpacking that came with having a mom in the military.



But this time was supposed to be different. Mom and I were going to settle here, in an apartment at 221 Baker Street. We were even flattening out the boxes and leaving them outside by the kerb, instead of saving them for the inevitable future move.

Oh, and this was also the first time we were moving without Dad. As much as a writer needed to tell the whole story, I wasn't ready to go there. Yet.

So yeah, it was your typical moving day. Or so it seemed. It figured that the moment Mom became a civilian and we were off the military post and *allegedly* safe, we found ourselves dodging an explosion.

BOOM!

Our entire apartment shook. Mom grabbed me and pulled me down to the floor, covering my head. The four bulky movers attempted to seek shelter behind our furniture.

The only person who wasn't ducking for cover was our new landlady, Mrs Hudson.

'Oh heavens!' she exclaimed with a shake of her head. 'No need to panic, everybody! It's really nothing.' She excused herself, muttering 'I told her not today' under her breath.

Maybe explosions were a routine occurrence in this



apartment building? If that was the case, I'd take the army post any day over some crazy New Yorker with a stick of dynamite.

The building was eerily silent for a few minutes, and we all returned to the business of moving and unpacking boxes.

Mom gave me an uneasy smile. 'Well, John, it looks as if you finally have something exciting to write about in your journal.'

Yeah, though I could've done without the stress of thinking we'd been bombed. For some reason, my grandma insisted on giving me a journal for my birthday every year. They were half filled with unfinished stories of space travel and doodles of my unoriginal comic book characters: Awesome Dude, Tarantula Man, Sergeant Speedo and Amazing Girl.

I stuck to fiction since there wasn't a reason to journal about my real life. Because my life was boring, dull, uninteresting, lacklustre, monotonous, unexciting. (Grandma had also given me a thesaurus.)

I guess you might think that moving to a new place was exciting, but it was something we did so often that it was more of a pain. And it was hard. New friends, new teachers, new routine. Once I got all that down, the days



on post would always run together: school, playground, homework and bedtime. Repeat. Then we'd move and it would start all over again. It didn't matter if I was in Georgia, Kentucky, Texas or Maryland. Somehow, it was always the same.

All that was about to change.

'Sorry!' Mrs Hudson re-entered our apartment, pulling someone behind her. 'You know what to do,' she ordered through clenched teeth.

A skinny white girl with bright red frizzy hair came forward. She had on an oversized white lab coat and goggles pushed up on her forehead. From the waist up, she was covered with black soot, except for where her goggles had been. She placed a hand on her hip. 'I've been informed by Mrs Hudson that my *harmless and perfectly safe* experiment has made for an unpleasant moving day for you. I've been instructed to apologise.' She sighed heavily.

Ah, did she consider that an apology?

'Thanks, dear. Do you live in the building?' Mom asked, always in a rush to make friends for me whenever we got to a new place (mostly out of guilt, since she was the reason we had to move so much). But this girl, who looked to be no older than seven, was way too young for





BOOKS

KITCHEN

FRAGILE

me to hang out with. I just turned *eleven*. I didn't need to spend the rest of my summer babysitting. *Especially* some weird science geek.

'Yes. Upstairs in 221B.' The girl walked over to Mom and extended her hand to shake. 'How long were you in Afghanistan?' she asked.

My mom's arm paused in mid-air as she glanced over at me. We were both thinking the same thing.

How did she know that?

The girl continued, 'You're an army doctor, I presume? And by the way you favour your right leg, it appears that you injured your left side somehow. Hip? I hear shrapnel can be quite painful.'

This was strange on so many levels. Mostly because whenever my mom's military service and injury were brought up, people avoided eye contact and spoke in a hushed voice. Not this girl. Nope. It was like she was asking about the weather. Her tone was even while her gaze mostly remained on Mom, but occasionally her attention would switch gears as if she was looking for something.

Mom's jaw was practically on the floor. 'How did you -'

She was cut off by the sound of broken glass coming from the living room.



Awesome. Moving day kept getting better and better.

One of the movers removed a blanket that had been protecting a floor-length mirror.

‘This wasn’t wrapped up tightly enough.’ The guy shrugged and continued to unwrap the blanket. ‘Couldn’t be helped.’

‘Stop!’ the girl shouted at him. She strode over and examined the broken glass.

Mrs Hudson laughed lightly to break the tension. ‘Oh, it’s just this thing she does.’

Um, OK. As if *that* explained what was going on. Were all New York City kids like that?

‘Hey!’ the mover yelled at her. ‘What are you doing?’

The girl was on her hands and knees, her face mere inches from the guy’s feet. Quickly, she jumped up and wiped her hands. ‘He kicked the mirror in.’

‘I didn’t –’ the mover began to protest.

She pointed to his shoe. ‘Based on the angle of the hole in the mirror, which is the size of the toe of your boot, the hole occurred at an upwards trajectory, an angle that matches the height of our front steps. Therefore, I’ve correctly deduced that you did indeed kick the mirror while walking up the steps. While in all probability said event was an accident, it certainly was your fault.’



The only thing clear to me was that I now lived among bombers and freaks.

‘Would you care for me to draw a diagram, or are you going to save us all time and confess?’ The mover stood there, dumbstruck. The rest of us were shocked as well. Except for Mrs Hudson, who seemed amused and a little bit tired.

The mover stuttered for a few moments before bending down so he was eye to eye with the girl. ‘Who *are* you?’

Her lips curled upwards into a satisfied smile. ‘I’m Shelby Holmes. *Detective* Shelby Holmes.’

