



Michael Caine as the bumbling Sherlock Holmes in *Without a Clue*: give him enough rope...

Sherlock Holmes in Without a Clue

Without a Clue ★★★
Cineplex Odeon Eaton Centre

review by Cathy Duong

The following conversation sums up the relationship between Dr. Watson (Ben Kingsley) and Sherlock Holmes (Michael Caine):

Holmes: "Are you sure he (the evil professor Moriarty) is not trying to kill me?"

Watson: "Of course not, he knows you're an idiot."

Holmes: "Thank God!"

In *Without a Clue*, a parody of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson is forever correcting and perfecting Reginald Kincaid. Kincaid is an actor whom Watson hired to act out the part of Sherlock Holmes, the great detective in his crime stories. Watson is slightly jealous when the character he created gains more popularity than himself; people address the duo as "the great Sherlock Holmes and Doctor ...er...?" Furthermore, Watson regards Holmes as a gambler, boaster and bumbling fool who keeps his hands occupied with more than free booze (mainly, women) but gains the credit for most of Watson's work.

The relationship of the two is similar to that of Larry and Balki in *Perfect Strangers*. Watson is the rational mind behind the detective work, while Holmes is the disaster who fouls up every time he is left alone. Yet, Holmes always manages to maintain the spotlight in public, with people popping their eyes, gushing, gaping and asking for his autograph while Watson timidly and impatiently waits in the background.

We follow the pair's escapades as they try to trace the culprit of a counterfeit currency operation. The evil force against

them is, of course, the scummy Professor Moriarty. During their case, Watson remains gallant, rational and hardworking while Holmes (who does not know the difference between a manchurian mamba and a mamba) fiddles about trying to impress his hordes of admirers, who are either too ignorant or too fanatical to notice that Holmes is babbling most of the time.

Ben Kingsley is superb as the well-mannered and intelligent Dr. Watson,

Watson: "Of course not, he knows you're an idiot."

making us wish that somehow he could become the object of the public's adoration rather than Holmes for once. Michael Caine manages to remain funny in his Inspector Gadget's role, even though his part depends too much on slapstick humor rather than wit for laughs at times.

The movie's funniest moments occur when Holmes is desperately seeking help from Watson, whether it be for a hint of how to answer a reporter's questions or for rescue from a physical mishap. Some scenes in the movie are quite predictable and there is a bit too much emphasis on Holmes' silliness. However, the pleasure is in seeing such great actors as Michael Caine and Ben Kingsley in a comedy (and they carried their parts well).

Without a Clue is definitely recommended for those pre-exam blues and post-exam migraines.

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