'Sherlock' returns with murder, mystery — and a baby

By JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

LONDON — There's something rotten in Baker

Street.

It may just be the diaper of baby Rosamund Watson, whose arrival at the start of the fourth season of "Sherlock" disrupts the relationship between brilliant, demanding detective Sherlock Holmes and his long-suffering friend Dr. John Watson.

The offspring of John and his enigmatic wife Mary — with Sherlock as a somewhat skeptical godfather — is one of the few things programmakers are willing to reveal before the first of three new episodes airs Jan. 1 on the BBC in Britain and on PBS in the United States.

"The unofficial alternative title for episode one is 'The Three Watsons,' because the baby changes the dynamic," said Mark Gatiss, the show's co-creator. But, he stresses: "Not in a cutesy way."

Fears of domestic coziness are quickly banished in the opening episode, officially titled "The Six Thatchers." Its central whodunit involves half a dozen plaster busts of former Prime Minister Margaret "Iron Lady" Thatcher.

That's just the starting point for 90 minutes of virtuosic puzzle-solving, prickly friendship and the spectacular return of ghosts from one character's past.

The new episodes pick up where the previous season left off almost three years ago. Since then, fans



AP Photo,

In this file photo dated April 15, 2015, British actor Benedict Cumberbatch arrives to host the Laureus World Sports Awards in Shanghai, China. The first of three new episodes of "Sherlock" will be broadcast Sunday Jan. 1, 2017, on BBC TV in Britain, with Cumberbatch once again taking on the role of the brilliant, demanding detective Sherlock Holmes.

have had to make do with a one-time special last year that took the characters back to their Victorian roots.

The show's success means Benedict Cumberbatch, who plays Holmes, and his Watson, Martin Freeman, are in huge demand, and "Sherlock" must fit around their other projects. Cumberbatch jumped back into Holmes' deerstalker hat right after finishing work on the Marvel adventure "Doctor Strange."

Everyone involved in "Sherlock" is sworn to spoiler-free secrecy about the plot, although Cumberbatch offers that it finds the great detective "at the top of his game, at the very bottom of his soul."

He says viewers will see more of Sherlock's vulnerabilities as he faces crises both personal and professional. filming. "There's some spectacular own-goals, misses and mistakes in this series."

Cumberbatch said over the four seasons, he's tried to probe what makes Sherlock tick — "What's his Achilles' heel?"

"It's been interesting how that person locked in a bit of glacial ice has slowly been thawed into someone we can actually relate to and understand," Cumberbatch said. "And there's a lot more of that in this series."

There is also a pivotal role for Mary, played by Amanda Abbington, whose secret past as a highly trained assassin was revealed in season three. There has been intense speculation about what will happen to her, inspired in part by the character's fate in Arthur Conan Doyle's original stories.

"I like the idea of her not being there forever," said Abbington, who recently split from real-life partner Freeman after a 16-year-relationship. "She wasn't (there forever) in the books, so I don't think she should be in this. It's about Sherlock and John, and it should be about them

"I don't want her to become the third wheel."

Co-creators Moffat and Gatiss still sound slightly bemused at the volcanic success of their modern-day take on the cerebral sleuth. When "Sherlock" debuted in 2010, Freeman had starred in the U.K. version of sitcom "The Office" but had yet to play Bilbo Baggins in "The Hobbit." Cumberbatch was best known for costume dramas and stage work.

"Benedict Cumberbatch went from 'Are you making that name up?' to the most famous man in the world, the most famous living Englishman, in the space of 90 minutes one Sunday," Moffat said.

During the first series, Cumberbatch and Freeman could film in London's teeming Trafalgar Square without drawing much attention. Now, crowds gather outside the nondescript building that plays 221B Baker St. on every shooting day there.

All this means the arrival of new episodes of "Sherlock" is a major TV event—and now a movie one, too. The last episode of the new series, "The Final Problem," will be broadcast in U.S. cinemas on Jan. 16 and 18.

Gatiss says there's no formula for the show's success.

"It's like bottled lightning," he said. "It'll never happen again. We've all had hits, but this is just a phenomenon."

December 28, 2016

10:30 | 11 AM | 11:30

Wednesday Morning

"It would be very dull if

he was permanently a kind of

impregnable hero who was

always right," Cumberbatch

said during a break from

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AFTERNOON

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COMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 28 ADULT OPEN GYM, 6-7 a.m.

Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Halfcourt basketball. Adults only. (541-276-8100)

276-8100)

WALKING FOR WELLNESS,
8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion
Ave., Pendleton. (541-276-8100)

BABY BOOGIE & TAPPIN'

TODDLERS, 10-10:45 a.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E Gladys Ave, Hermiston. (541-567-2882) CLAUS-TROPHOBIA. 11

CLAUS-TROPHOBIA, 11 a.m.-8 p.m., Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. A holiday-themed escape room. Registration for 20-minutes sessions required; free and family/friendly/541-966-0380)

ly-friendly. (541-966-0380) STORY TIME, 11:15 a.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. (541-567-2882)

STANFIELD SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Stanfield Community Center, 225 W. Roosevelt, Stanfield. Cost is \$3.50 for seniors, \$6 for others. (541-449-1332)

PÉNDLETON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St., Pendleton. Costs \$3.50 or \$6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101)

ADULT BEGINNERS' COM-PUTERS, 3-4 p.m., Pendleton Public Library meeting room, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Registration is required. Classes tailored to the needs of the attendees. (541-966-0380)

VEGAN/SUSTAINABLE LIV-ING POTLUCK SUPPER, 7 p.m., location varies, location varies, Pendleton. Bring a vegan dish and recipe. Gluten-free friendly group. Call to RSVP and for driving directions. (541-969-3057)

THURSDAY, DEC. 29

ADULT OPEN GYM, 6-7 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Halfcourt basketball. Adults only. (541-276-8100) WALKING FOR WELLNESS,

8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. (541-276-8100)

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME, 10:15-11 a.m.. Pendleton Public

10:15-11 a.m., Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Stories and activities for young children. (541-966-0380) PRESCHOOL STORY AND

PRESCHOOL STORY AND CRAFT TIME, 10:30 a.m., Mll-ton-Freewater Public Library, 8 S.W. Eighth Ave., Milton-Freewater. (Lili Schmidt 541-938-8247)

PENDLETON SENIOR MÉAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St., Pendleton. Costs \$3.50 or \$6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101)

HERMISTON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Hermiston Senior Center, 435 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. Costs \$3.50 for seniors over 50, \$4 for adults under 50, \$1 for children 10 and over, \$3 for Meals on Wheels. Extra 50 cents for utensils/dishes. Transportation arranged by donation. Thrift Store open 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. (541-567-

BOARDMAN SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St., Boardman. Cost is \$4 for seniors 55 and over or \$5 for adults. (541-

481-3257)
SENSORY STORY TIME,
12:30 p.m., Boardman Public Library, 200 S. Main St., Boardman.
For children from birth to age 4.

(541-481-2665) **SKILLS FOR LIFE**, 3-5 p.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Gym activities and life skills for middle and high school students. Registration requested. (Danny Bane 541.379.4250)

541-379-4250)
TEEN HOLIDAY MOVIE, 3
p.m., Hermiston Public Library,
235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston.
Hang out, chow on snacks and
watch a holiday movie. For teens
only. Free. (541-567-2882)

THE ARC UMATILLA COUNTY BINGO, 6-10 p.m., The Arc Building, 215 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. Doors open at 6 p.m., seats may be held until 6:30 p.m., then all seats first come, first served; games begin at 7 p.m. Proceeds benefit Umatilla County citizens with developmental disabilities. 18 years or older, must have proof of age and photo I.D. Basic pot \$20, prizes range from \$20-\$750. (541-567-7615)

FIDDLERS NIGHT, 6:30-8:30

p.m., Brookedale Assisted Living, 980 W. Highland Ave., Hermiston. Enjoy light refreshments, listen to some favorite oldies or join in the jam session. All ages welcome. (541-567-3141)

FRIDAY, DEC. 30

ADULT OPÉN GYM, 6-7 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Halfcourt basketball. Adults only. (541-276-8100)

WALKING FOR WELLNESS, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. (541-276-8100) STORY TIME, 10:15 a.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. (541-567-

Gladys Ave., Hermiston. (541-567-2882) STORY AND CRAFT TIME,

2 p.m., Echo Public Library, 20 S. Bonanza, Echo. (541-376-8411) VFW BINGO, 6 p.m., Hermitten VFW 45 W. Cherny, St.

VFW BINGO, 6 p.m., Hermiston VFW, 45 W. Cherry St., Hermiston. Doors open at 6 p.m., games begin at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome. (541-567-6219)

SATURDAY, DEC. 31
IMAC BREAKFAST, 7:30-1:30 a.m. Stokes Landing Se-

10:30 a.m., Stokes Landing Senior Center, Irrigon. Fundraiser to create the Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center. (Peggy Price 541-567-3806)

L'IL BUCKS OPEN GYM,

8:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. For students in firstthird grades.

FREE FOR ALL, 9:30-10:15 a.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Free art classes for children up to age 12. Children under 8 should be accompanied by an adult. (Roberta Lavadour 541-278-9201)

FAMILY HISTORY WORK-SHOPS, 10 a.m., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 850 S.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Workshops, photo scanning and more. (Stephanie Blackburn 541-567-

HERMISTON RESOLUTION RUN, 10-11 a.m., Riverfront Park, Southwest 23rd Street, Hermiston. Free run/ walk through Riverfront Park and the Oxbox Trail. Families, kids, strollers and pets welcome to proceed at your own pace and choose a distance that challenges you. (Tim Beal 509-

954-8778)
HIP & HANDMADE, 11 a.m.12 p.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Free drop-in project class for adults. (Roberta Lavadour 541278-9201)

SUNDAY, JAN. 1
FIRST DAY HIKE, 11 a.m.,
Emigrant Springs State Heritage
Park, 65068 Old Oregon Trail
Highway, Meacham. Moderate
two-mile snowshoe hike begins at
the Oregon Trail kiosk west of the
park entrance. Wear appropriate
clothing and bring water, a camera
or binoculars and your own snowshoeing gear; limited gear may be
available, register to reserve a pair
at 541-983-2277. Park should be
contacted in case of cancellation
due to inclement weather. Free
and suitable for ages 8 and up.

(Chris Havel 503-986-0722)