



THE IMMORTAL NIGHTINGALE

SHERLOCK HONG is fifteen years old, back in Singapore after studying in a boarding school in England. He returns to Singapore after joining the secret organisation the International Order of Young Seekers and is eager to prove himself a worthy member. One day, he hears about a local magician William Fong who intends to bring a dead nightingale back to life.

Will Sherlock be able to solve the mystery of the immortal nightingale and prove himself worthy of the International Order of Young Seekers?

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For Review Only

DON BOSCO



THE IMMORTAL NIGHTINGALE

Marshall Cavendish Children

SHERLOCK HONG ADVENTURES



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D O N B O S C O

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**IMMORTAL
NIGHTINGALE**

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D O N B O S C O

CHAPTER 1

My name is Sherlock Hong.

Some might find this peculiar, but it is the truth, my name is indeed Sherlock, even though my father sometimes denies it and many of my relatives mispronounce it, I suspect on purpose.

The year is 1891. The month, April.

It's a glorious time to be alive. There's just too much to see and do and investigate. Everywhere and all the time.

For this reason, I hate being stuck here in Singapore.

I'm fifteen years old, although inside my head, and also deep in my heart, I often feel very much older.

I can't wait to leave home and travel around the world. I want to search for lost treasures and visit forgotten tribes and document strange happenings.

But that won't happen for some time, a few years at least, until Father agrees to pay for my adventures, or unless I manage to earn some money myself. Which I am determined to do as soon as possible.

To be fair, things are tolerable here, at least for now, not as dreadfully boring as I had expected, and you will soon understand what I mean if you continue to read this report.

This is my first case file. My notes on a most astonishing affair that happened right

here in my neighbourhood. Just thinking about the events makes my hands tremble and my heart pound faster.

No matter how bizarre the situations and complications might appear, please do not think that I've lost my mind.

I solemnly vow that every bit of this account is real.

I humbly dedicate this piece of work to each and every one of you, brave members of the International Order of Young Seekers, my fellow adventurers, experimenters and champions of justice.

You'll be able to judge for yourselves how I've applied my intelligence, practised courage and remained true to my sense of justice, so that you might decide if I deserve to be promoted to the Higher Rank of the Order.

As our grand motto declares:
The future belongs to the young
and brave.

We begin at the beginning.

CHAPTER 2

Lunch was a big bowl of rice with spicy vegetables and also pork stew, which Mother learnt to make from a recipe that she found in a brown book at the Singapore Library.

I ate quickly. I was famished after digging around at a nearby site the whole morning, searching for the remains of ancient Malay warriors who might have died bravely in battle in this area who knows how many centuries ago.

This area being River Valley Road, the territory around the well-ventilated but

sparsely furnished bungalow belonging to my father which we call home.

Father being Master Hong, community physician of considerable renown, absent from home for the past few days on account of a young patient in Sumatra requiring his attention desperately.

When I was almost done with my rice and vegetable and stew, Mother, known throughout our community as the kind and gentle Madam Hong, suddenly remembered something important.

“Sherlock, your father has sent word that he will be back from Sumatra this very evening. He wants to talk to you urgently. It’s important, and it concerns your future. Please talk to your father and don’t try to hide from him again like you did last week.”

I had been expecting this, it was just a matter of time, and so I replied with an extremely expressive groan.

“I know what he wants me to do, Ma,” I said. “But it’s not fair! I don’t like the school at Katong. It’s too far away. And besides, all they do there is copy lines from a book. It’s torture! Shouldn’t I be making better use of my time? Why can’t I stay at home and conduct my experiments?”

Mother sighed. She touched my arm. But her voice was firm.

“Sherlock, I wish you’d stop your obsession with alchemy. It won’t get you very far in the world. When we sent you to boarding school in England, you should have behaved and tried to fit in. But you got yourself expelled. And now that you’re back here, you’re kicking up a fuss again. What will we do with you?”

Before I could open my mouth, she quickly continued, “Your father understands you, and he cares. He thinks you can be a great doctor and help run our family business one day. So he’s engaged a tutor to help you with your studies. You can continue with your lessons at home.”

Eh? Continue with my lessons at home? I wasn’t expecting this. Good news? Bad news? Too soon to tell.

“Aargh!” I grunted and clutched at my chest as though there was a great pain inside. “A tutor? I knew it. Pa wishes to imprison me. Make sure I never leave this house!”

Mother laughed. She pushed her chair back and got ready to leave the table.

“He has no such intentions,” she said.

“Your new tutor’s name is Miss Priya. She’ll come by later this afternoon to meet you.”

I raised my eyebrows. So soon? My suspicions were confirmed. I could feel their trap closing in on me.

Mother continued, “She’s the niece of your father’s friend, Mr Narayanan who used to be headmaster of a big school in India. I don’t know much about her. But your father says she’s an intelligent young lady and she’s kindly agreed to help us out. That’s good enough for me.”

“But...”

At that moment, our house maid hurried in. She seemed very upset.

“Madam Hong,” Ah Mah cried, “you have a visitor. It’s Uncle Chan’s daughter, Mei. If you don’t help her, she’ll get thrown out of her home and she might end up dead on the streets! You can’t let that happen to her!”

Mother looked concerned, but as always her voice was calm and steady. “Slow down, Ah Mah, and explain everything slowly. What’s happened to Mei?”

Ah Mah started to wail. “Her father’s immortal nightingale! It’s dead!”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don Bosco describes himself as “geeky, cheeky and magicky”. His books include the *Sherlock Hong* series and the *Time Talisman* series. These stories are full of fun, adventure and mystery, all inspired by Asian history and culture. Don is also the author of the bestselling *Lion City Adventures*. He lives in Singapore. To find out more, visit his website: <http://www.SuperCoolBooks.com>