

Jean's Comments

Characters don't
sound British.

Summary: Alice Holmes investigates the murder of three teenage Gypsy girls. The investigation will take her into a feud between families vying for control.

"Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of man?" That was the introduction to the American radio program, "The Shadow". I definitely know the evil in the hearts of man, after twenty years on the job for the "Met", one of the more popular names for Scotland Yard.

My name is Alice Holmes, a Chief Inspector for The Yard. Yes, the name is Holmes and Sherlock ~~is~~ was a distant ancestor. He was the younger brother of my 4th Great-Grandfather, Mycroft Holmes. My father, Jack, was a commander, and my grandfather, Rupert, was an assistant commissioner at the Yard. I work for the Homicide and Serious Crimes Command with one of the investigation teams.

My latest case started when a call was received on 999 at 7 a.m., there were bodies found in Lambeth. Clarke Benson, my C~~o~~ommander, came to my office and told me I was assigned me to investigate the apparent murders of three young women whose bodies were found in Norwood Park in the West Norwood residential area of Lambeth, one of the worst boroughs in London, but only sixth worst after Westminster for crime. Actually I feel quite safe living in Westminster at 219 Baker Street, not far from Sherlock's old place.

We had problems in Norwood Park because a group of immigrant Gypsies camped there after being evicted from Marble Arch in Westminster, where they were causing the residents problems. I was reluctant to handle the case, but Commander Benson insisted.

Comment [PHS 151]: Passive voice. "When we received a call"

Comment [PHS 152]: A little passive. "A runner found three bodies"

Comment [PHS 153]: This is a very long sentence. Break it up.

Comment [PHS 154]: Work this in later, like when she's heading home.

Comment [PHS 155]: Like what?

Comment [PHS 156]: Why? Oh nevermind I see the explanation below. So I don't think you need this sentence at all.

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

"Chief Holmes I expect you to carry ~~outen-with~~ your assigned duties."

"But sir, you know my parentage and I respectfully decline."

My grandmother was a Gypsy and ~~was had~~ a great influence on my life, which I believed could impact ~~my judgement decisions in this case I had to make dealing with the Gypsies.~~

"Your parentage is precisely why you ~~re are being~~ assigned and of course your investigative skills. ~~You speak their language fluently, right?: not to mention you are fluent in their language.~~"

"The language I know is from the Welsh Kale, there are differences."

"I am sure your skills will do well, now, let's get on with it, the bodies are waiting, ~~no more arguments,~~ and take Roberts with you, he needs more experience."

"Yes, Ssir."

I stopped by ~~Heather's the dispatcher's~~ desk, "Heather, when ~~everyone from~~ my team comes in, tell them to meet me at Norwood Park on the ~~Salter's Hill~~ side, we got bodies."

~~I went to James Roberts's was organizing his~~ desk. — Is he her Watson?

"James we got a case, let's go."

We got a marked Vauxhall Astra, left the Curtis Green building on ~~Victoria Embankment~~ and headed to West Norwood with siren blaring. ~~On the way I told James about West Norwood.~~

"West Norwood used to have a ^G gypsy community in the 1700's around Gypsy Hill. A woman called Margaret Finch was the queen of the Gypsies. ~~used to live there~~ around that time. People used to come there to have their fortunes read. I think these immigrant Gypsies are trying to reestablish a community there."

~~We headed over the Westminster Bridge, going toward Kensington Road. The siren helped and the fact we could use the bus lanes.~~ Getting over the ~~Westminster b~~ Bridge was easy

Comment [PHS 157]: You are mentioning way too many location. I can't keep track and it's distracting me from the story.

Comment [PHS 158]:

Comment [PHS 159]: Or doing something that gives a hint of his personality.

Comment [PHS 1510]: More locations to keep track of. Are they all crucial to the story?

trying too hard to create setting.

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

till we hit the other side with traffic piled up everywhere. The buses were front to bumper, ~~so I had to try to get around them.~~

I told James, "Turn on the Tannoy, James, and give me the mike." I started yelling in it. "Come on SAAB, get off the phone and move over, Police emergency." He forced right almost hitting a bike rider. Other cars moved out of the way. I saw the entry to A23, Kensington Road, cut off two cars barely missing their front bumpers. Cars coming the other way hit their breaks hard with tires squealing. Once on A23 we made good time, I moved around the obstacle course of cars. James had the hand-bar on the dash board in a death grip, his face a bit pale.

I turned my head to James. "We're almost there."

He sighed. "Thank God. This time you didn't crash the car."

"That one wasn't my fault."

"Yes, of course." He rolled his eyes.

We arrived at the park about 8 a.m. It was a sunny-clear spring day; many songs of the birds filled the park; the scent of flowers was everywhere. ~~You could see~~ Central London, seven miles away, and many of the sights such as the London Eye and the Shard.

Police cars were everywhere blocking blocked off Salter's Hill; news vans from the tabloids and TV stations swarmed the area were parked all along Salter's Hill.

~~One of the reporters yelled at me.~~

One of the reporters yelled at me, "Hey, Holmes how about a statement?"

I pushed through the local residents and reporters that were hovering about the roped off crime scene. A number of uniformed officers keptleping order. On the campsite side, another group of people stood, a man was arguing with one of the officers. We found t]he medical

Comment [PHS IS11]: Who? The Saab or James?

Comment [PHS IS12]:

Comment [PHS IS13]: Is this all necessary? I feel like you're trying too hard to create setting and it's slowing your story down.

Comment [PHS IS14]: Your story starts here. Everything before this is backstory or can be weaved in later or cut.

Comment [PHS IS15]: For folks not familiar with London, these don't create a visual.

Story starts here.

part

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

examiner and a CSI team stood around the bodies, not far from the Gypsy camp which was in the center of the park.

"What we got, Nigel?" I ~~said to~~ asked our medical examiner, an older man, with white hair and steel-gray eyes.

"Three young women, teenagers, their throats ~~have been~~ slashed, and their bodies mutilated." He checked his notebook. "Their names are Nuri, Esmeralda, and Drina according to their father. He's the one over ~~there~~ their arguing with the officer, his name is Fonso and he's the leader of the people here. The poor guy is really distraught. It took two officers to restrain him."

"What's the time of death?"

"~~Give or take~~ less than twelve hours. I'll know more once we get them back to the lab."

I ~~examined~~ looked at their mutilated naked bodies. ~~ons.~~ there were a Δ symbol was carved on the girls' stomachs. I knew what that symbol meant. what?

~~I saw~~ George, one of the CSU guys, approached me. I know, "How goes it George?"

"Not easy. This is a heavily used area, too many foot prints to be of use. Lot of runners use the park, actually it was a runner who ~~that~~ called it in. A lot of trash from who knows who, but we have to bag it all, you never know what we ll ~~will~~ find." He crouched closer to one of the bodies and pointed to the ground around her. "I ~~would say~~ think this is a dump site and the girls were killed elsewhere. There's not enough blood around the bodies, ~~and since they have no~~ clothes, we're left with the bodies. Maybe will find something there back in the lab."

~~I noticed he~~ George had covered the girls' hands and feet in plastic to preserve any material under the nails.

"Thanks, George. Ok, James it's time to talk with the father."

Comment [PHS 1516]:

Comment [PHS 1517]: Three of his daughters were killed and he's arguing? Wouldn't he be inconsolable. Sobbing?

Comment [PHS 1518]: What's her emotional reaction to she is seeing?

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: *ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB* BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

I approached the man who was still being restrained by two officers. He was yelling, "I want to see my daughters." He was a tall man, over six feet~~6-foot~~, with dark skin, and pitch-black hair.

Comment [PHS 1519]: They restrained a grieving father?

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

Summary: Alice Holmes investigates the murder of three teenage Gypsy girls. The investigation will take her into a feud between families vying for control.

Comment [ED1]: The title says "Alyson Holmes", which sounds better.

"Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of **manmen**?" That was the introduction to the American radio program, "The Shadow". I definitely know the evil in the hearts of **manmen**, after twenty years on the job for the "Met", one of the more popular names for Scotland Yard.

Comment [ED2]: This entire paragraph is telling not showing

Comment [ED3]: You've just limited your readership to those 60 or older

My name is Alice Holmes, a Chief Inspector for The Yard. Yes, the name is Holmes and Sherlock was a distant ancestor. He was the younger brother of my 4th Great Grandfather Mycroft Holmes. My father, Jack, was a commander, and my grandfather, Rupert, was an assistant commissioner at the Yard. I work for the Homicide and Serious Crimes Command with one of the investigation teams.

Comment [ED4]: This entire paragraph is telling, not showing. Why not weave her backstory into the story?

Comment [ED5]: The title says "Alyson Holmes"

Comment [ED6]: Actual rank is "Detective Chief Inspector"

Comment [ED7]: Is this a genealogical study or a story?

Comment [ED8]: This can easily come out through remarks from characters

My latest case started when a call was received on 999 at 7 AM. There were bodies found in Lambeth. Clark Benson, my Commander, came to my office and told me I was assigned me to investigate the apparent murders of three young women whose bodies **were had been** found in Norwood Park in the West Norwood residential area of Lambeth, one of the worst boroughs in London, but only sixth worst after Westminster for crime. Actually, I feel quite safe living in Westminster at 219 Baker Street, not far from Sherlock's old place.

Comment [ED9]: This sentence is telling

Comment [ED10]: If you're going to use this, explain it for non-UK readers

Comment [ED11]: Make this a scene. Benson comes in and tells her about the call. They converse and tell us about Lambeth.

Comment [ED12]: What? Why bring this up? It only complicates things.

We'd had problems in Norwood Park **before**, because a group of immigrant Gypsies had camped there, after being evicted from Marble Arch in Westminster, where they were causing the residents problems. I was reluctant to handle the case, but Commander Benson insisted.

Comment [ED13]: "Gypsy" is regarded as a derogatory term by the Romani people. A police DCI would not use it.

Comment [ED14]: Used "problems" twice in same sentence

Comment [ED15]: Why?

—totally unlike Sherlock Holmes, who would make his ^{own} observations and deductions, certainly not from the police
—why the Holmes angle?

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

"Chief Holmes I expect you to carry on with your assigned duties."

Comment [ED16]: Is that really what he would call her?

"But sir, you know my parentage, and I respectfully decline." My grandmother was a Gypsy and had a great influence on my life, which I believed could impact decisions I had to make dealing with the Gypsies."

Comment [ED17]: Family?

Comment [ED18]: And so she would be even more aware of the stigma of the word!

Comment [ED19]: This makes no sense.

"Your parentage is precisely why you are being assigned and of course your investigative skills, not to mention you are fluent in their language."

Comment [ED20]: Family?

Comment [ED21]: Why, besides the language, does her family background matter?

"The language I know is from the Welsh Kale, there are differences."

"I am sure your skills will do well. Now, let's get on with it, the bodies are waiting,

Comment [ED22]: awkward

no more arguments. And take Roberts with you, he needs more experience."

Comment [ED23]: sounds like an impatient parent

"Yes, Sir."

I stopped by Heather's desk. "Heather, when everyone from my team comes in, tell them to meet me at Norwood Park on the Salter's Hill side. We've got bodies."

I went to James Roberts's desk. "James, we have got a case. Let's go."

Comment [ED24]: description of James? Reaction to information?

We got a marked Vauxhall Astra, left the Curtis Green building on Victoria Embankment and headed to West Norwood with siren blaring. On the way, I told James about West Norwood.

Comment [ED25]: Yes, fine, you did research. Work it in more subtly.

Comment [ED26]: Why? They're dead.

Comment [ED27]: Motivate this discussion. Have James ask about the area or the people.

Comment [ED28]:

"West Norwood used to have a gypsy community in the 1700's around Gypsy Hill. A woman called Margaret Finch was the queen of the Gypsies, and used to live there around that time. People used to come there to have their fortunes read. I think these immigrant Gypsies are trying to reestablish a community there."

Comment [ED29]: How could this possibly be relevant now?

We headed over the Westminster Bridge, going toward Kensington Road. The siren helped and the fact we could use the bus lanes. Getting over the bridge was easy until we hit the other side with traffic piled up everywhere. The buses were front to bumper, so I had to try to get around them. I told James, "Turn on the Tannoy, and give me the mike." I started yelling in it.

Comment [ED30]: Why would she think that? She just told us they were thrown out of Westminster. They didn't go there willingly.

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

"Come on SAAB, get off the phone and move over, Police emergency." He forced right almost hitting a bike rider. Other cars moved out of the way. I saw the entry to A23, Kensington Road, cut off two cars barely missing their front bumpers. Cars coming the other way hit their breaks ^{brake} hard with tires squealing. Once on A23, we made good time, I moved around the obstacle course of cars. James had the hand-bar on the dash board in a death grip, his face a bit pale.

Comment [ED31]: ?

I turned my head to James, "We're almost there."

He sighed, "Thank God, ~~This time~~ you didn't crash the car this time."

"That one wasn't my fault."

"Yes, of course." He rolled his eyes.

We arrived at the park about 8 ~~AM~~. It was a sunny, clear spring day, many ~~Birdsongs of the birds~~ filled the park and the scent of flowers was everywhere. ~~From here~~, you could see ~~Central London, seven miles away, and many of the sights such as~~ the London Eye and the Shard.

Police cars were everywhere blocking off Salter's Hill, ~~N~~ news vans from the ~~T~~ tabloids and TV stations were parked all along Salter's Hill. One of the reporters yelled at me,

Comment [ED32]: So what was her hurry? They weren't first responders.

Comment [ED33]: I doubt if tabloids have news vans

"Hey Holmes how about a statement?"

Comment [ED34]: She presumably ignores them. Say so.

I pushed through the local residents and reporters ~~who~~ were hovering about the roped-off crime scene, ~~where a number of~~ uniformed officers were keeping order. On the campsite side, another group of people stood. ~~Once~~ a man was arguing with one of the officers.

Comment [ED35]: Of what?

We found the medical examiner and a CSI team around the bodies, not far from the Gypsy camp ~~which was~~ in the center of the park.

Comment [ED36]:

"What do we ~~have~~ got, Nigel?" I ~~asked~~ ~~said to~~ our medical examiner, an older man, with white hair and steel ~~gray~~ eyes.

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

“Three young women, teenagers, ~~sisters~~. Their throats have been slashed and their bodies mutilated. Their names are Nuri, Esmeralda, and Drina according to their father. He’s the one over the ~~ref~~ arguing with the officer. ~~His~~ name is Fonso, and he’s the leader of the people here. The poor guy is really distraught. It took two officers to restrain him.”

“What’s the time of death?”

“Give or take, less than twelve hours. I’ll know more once we get them back to the lab.”

I looked at the mutilations. ~~there were a~~ symbol ~~had been~~ carved on ~~each of~~ the girls’ stomachs.

Comment [ED37]: Examined?

I knew what ~~the~~ symbol meant.

I saw one of the CSU guys I know. “How goes it, George?”

“Not easy. This is a heavily used area. Too many foot prints to be of use. A lot of runners use the park; actually, it was a runner ~~who~~ called it in. A lot of trash from who knows who, but we have to bag it all; you never know what we will find. I would say this is a dump site, and the girls were killed elsewhere. There’s not enough blood around the bodies and, ~~since they have no clothes, we’re left with the bodies~~. Maybe ~~we~~ will find something ~~there~~ back in the lab.”

Comment [ED38]: Mention earlier

Comment [ED39]: Huh?

I noticed he ~~’d~~ covered the hands and feet in plastic to preserve any material under the ~~nails~~.

Comment [ED40]: Does she have any reaction whatsoever to this horrifying sight?

“Thanks, George. ~~Okay~~, James, it’s time to talk with the father.”

I approached the man who was still being restrained by two officers. He was yelling, “I want to see my daughters.” He was a tall man, over ~~six feet~~, with dark skin, and ~~pitch black~~ ~~pitch-black~~ hair.

JULIE

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

This shows potential. ↑

Summary: Alice Holmes investigates the murder of three teenage Gypsy girls. The investigation will take her into a feud between families vying for control.

When is this set?

of what?

Author's

"Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of man?" That was the introduction to the American radio program, "The Shadow". I definitely know the evil in the hearts of man, after twenty years on the job for the "Met", one of the more popular names for Scotland Yard.

My name is Alice Holmes, a Chief Inspector for The Yard. Yes, the name is Holmes and Sherlock was a distant ancestor. He was the younger brother of my ^{fourth} 4th Great Grandfather Mycroft Holmes. My father, Jack, was a commander, and my grandfather, Rupert, was an assistant commissioner at the Yard. I work for the Homicide and Serious Crimes Command with one of the investigation teams.

My latest case started when a call ^{came in?} was received on 999 at 7 a.m., there were bodies found

999 like 911.

Run-on

in Lambeth. Clarke Benson, my Commander, came to my office and told me I was assigned to investigate the apparent murders of three young women whose bodies were found in Norwood Park in the West Norwood residential area of Lambeth, one of the worst boroughs in London, but only sixth worst after Westminster for crime. Actually I feel quite safe living in Westminster at 219 Baker Street, not far from Sherlock's old place.

Why? alarm? dog? gun? neighbors?

Verb tense

We had problems in Norwood Park, ^{having been} because a group of immigrant Gypsies camped there after being evicted from Marble Arch in Westminster, where they were causing the residents

How?

problems. I was reluctant to handle the case, but Commander Benson insisted.

JULIE

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

Direct Address

"Chief Holmes, I expect you to carry on with your assigned duties."

"But sir, you know my parentage and I respectfully decline." My grandmother was a Gypsy and had a great influence on my life, which I believed could impact decisions I had to make dealing with the Gypsies."

Verb tense

might

"Your parentage is precisely why you are being assigned and of course your investigative skills, not to mention you are fluent in their language."

R-O

"The language I know is from the Welsh Kale, there are differences."

R-O Verb choice

"I am sure your skills will do well, now, let's get on with it, the bodies are waiting, no more arguments, and take Roberts with you, he needs more experience."

"Yes, Sir."

I stopped by Heather's desk, "Heather, when everyone from my team comes in, tell them to meet me at Norwood Park on the Salter's Hill side, we got bodies."

Would = Brit say "got" or "have"?

Direct Address

I went to James Roberts's desk. "James, we got a case, let's go."

We got a marked Vauxhall Astra, left the Curtis Green building on Victoria Embankment and headed to West Norwood with siren blaring. On the way I told James about West Norwood.

West Norwood K3

"West Norwood used to have a gypsy community in the 1700's around Gypsy Hill. A woman called Margaret Finch was the queen of the Gypsies, used to live there around that time.

filled down in on 4 location provide some history

used to K2

People used to come there to have their fortunes read. I think these immigrant Gypsies are trying to reestablish a community there."

We headed over the Westminster Bridge, going toward Kensington Road. The siren helped and the fact we could use the bus lanes. Getting over the bridge was easy till we hit the other side with traffic piled up everywhere. The buses were front to bumper, so I had to try to get around them. I told James, "Turn on the Tannoy, and give me the mic." I started yelling in it.

On the other side of

British phrase

mic

JULIE

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

"Come on ²²⁵SAAB, get off the phone and move over. Police emergency." He forced right almost hitting a bike rider. Other cars moved out of the way. I saw the entry to A23, Kensington Road, cut off two cars barely missing their front bumpers. Cars coming the other way hit their breaks hard with tires squealing. Once on A23 we made good time, I moved around the obstacle course of cars. James had the hand-bar on the dash board in a death grip, his face a bit pale.

I turned my head to James, "We're almost there."

He sighed, "Thank God. This time you didn't crash the car."

"That one wasn't my fault."

"Yes, of course." He rolled his eyes.

We arrived at the park about 8 a.m. It was a sunny clear spring day; ~~many songs of the birds~~ ^{bird song} filled the park; ^{2nd} the scent of flowers everywhere. ^{one} You could see Central London, seven miles away, and many of the sights such as the London Eye and the Shard.

Police cars were everywhere blocking off Salter's Hill, ^{at} news vans from the Tabloids and TV stations were parked all along Salter's Hill. ^{at} One of the reporters yelled at me,

"Hey Holmes how about a statement?" I pushed through the local residents and reporters

that were hovering about the roped-off crime scene, a number of uniformed officers keeping order. On the campsite side another group of people stood, ^{at} a man was arguing with one of the officers. We found the medical examiner and a CSI team around the bodies, not far from the Gypsy camp ~~which was~~ in the center of the park.

"What we got, Nigel?" I ^{asked} said to our medical examiner, an older man, with white hair and steel gray eyes.

"Three young women, ^{sisters} teenagers, their throats have been slashed and their bodies mutilated. Their names are Nuri, Esmeralda, and Drina, according to their father. He's the one

JULIE

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

over their arguing with the officer, his name is Fonso, and he's the leader of the people here. The poor guy is really distraught. It took two officers to restrain him."

"What's the time of death?"

"Give or take, less than twelve hours. I'll know more once we get them back to the lab."

R.O. I looked at the mutilations, ^{was} there ^{each of} were a symbol carved on the girls' stomachs. I knew what ^{the} symbol meant.
 subject-verb agreement Describe symbol.

Use x2 R.O. I saw one of the CSU guys I know, "How goes it, George?" I asked a CSU guy I know.

R.O. "Not easy. This is a heavy used area, too many foot prints to be of use. Lot of runners use the park, actually it was a runner that called it in. A lot of trash from who knows who, but we have to bag it all, you never know what we will find. I would say this is a dump site and the girls were killed elsewhere. There's not enough blood around the bodies and since they have no clothes, we're left with the bodies. ^{will} Maybe will find something there back in the lab."

1st mention of their being naked I noticed he covered the hands and feet in plastic to preserve any material under the nails.

"Thanks, George. Ok, James, it's time to talk with the father." "That our vic's father?" (point)

I approached the man who was still being restrained by two officers. He was yelling, "I want to see my daughters." He was a tall man, over 6 foot, with dark skin, and pitch black hair.

I HEAR ELVIS COSTELLO'S "WATCHING THE DETECTIVES" IN MY HEAD.
ALYSON HOLMES READS LIKE A MALE.
I HAD TO DOUBLE CHECK THAT THE PROTAGONIST WAS FEMALE.
PAINT THE SCENE WITH THE REPORTERS AND THE TABLOIDS.
HAVE THE PROTAGONIST OVERHEAR ONE REFER TO THE MURDERER BY A MONIKER - "GYPSY MOTH", "GYPSY KILLER", ...
HAVE HOLMES APPROACH NIGEL AND REPORT WHAT INFO. SHE HAS ALREADY AND THEN TRY TO OBTAIN MORE.
TO QUOTE DETECTIVE JOE FRIDAY FROM "DRAGNET",
"JUST THE FACTS, MA'AM." LET'S SEE SOME GOOD DETECTIVE WORK.

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

Richard-

We meet again. I think I remember this story from an earlier meeting. It is just as arresting as it was the first time.

I think you have a story that will attract attention. Any time there are young people murdered as brutally as this, you have the interest and sympathy immediately from the reader. We're rooting for the bad guy to get caught and punished. We're cheering on the investigator. Go get 'em.

We'd spoken before about your characters (you) giving lectures or info dumps. There is a section where Alyson is going on about the section of the city. At this point in the story, we just want to hear about the murders. If the section of the city is important, allow it out come out naturally. Maybe the sidekick had never been there. A small bit of dialog would get the point across without the feeling of being lectured.

I like the idea that she wants to bow out because of her background. Good bit of dialogue with the chief.

Please, please, please (three pleases) tidy up your grammar. It is a constant diversion. It makes the story come off as amateurish. You don't need any competition for attention. The poor grammar and sentence structure bleeds away interest.

*Good luck with this investigation. I hope we learn who the guilty party is and he swings.
Dave*

Summary: Alice Holmes investigates the murder of three teenage Gypsy girls. The investigation will take her into a feud between families vying for control.

delet
"Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of man?" That was the introduction to the American radio program, "The Shadow". I definitely know the evil in the hearts of man, after twenty years on the job for the "Met", one of the more popular names for Scotland Yard.

My name is Alice Holmes, a Chief Inspector for The Yard. Yes, the name is Holmes and Sherlock was a distant ancestor. ~~He was the younger brother of my 4th Great Grandfather Mycroft Holmes. My father, Jack, was a commander, and my grandfather, Rupert, was an assistant commissioner at the Yard.~~ I work for the Homicide and Serious Crimes Command with

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

one of the investigation teams. *(You don't need to give a summary here. Slows things down. Murder mysteries start fast and fly forward. Skip the backstory.)*

My latest case started when a call was received on 999 at 7 a.m. There were bodies found in Lambeth. *(All passive. Who found the bodies and under what circumstances? Use active sentences.)* Clarke Benson, my Commander, came to my office and told me I was assigned to investigate the apparent murders of three young women whose bodies were found in Norwood Park in the West Norwood residential area of Lambeth, one of the worst boroughs in London, but only sixth worst after Westminster for crime. Actually I feel quite safe living in Westminster at 219 Baker Street, not far from Sherlock's old place. *(Why not have this information as a dialogue from the chief to Alyson?)*

~~We had problems in Norwood Park because a~~ A group of immigrant Gypsies camped there in Norwood Park after being evicted from Marble Arch in Westminster, where they were causing the residents problems. I was reluctant to handle the case, but Commander Benson insisted.

"Chief Holmes(,) I expect you to carry on with your assigned duties."

"But sir, you know my parentage and I respectfully decline." My grandmother was a Gypsy and had a great influence on my life, which I believed could impact decisions I had to make dealing with the Gypsies. \

"Your parentage is precisely why you are being assigned and of course your investigative skills, not to mention you are fluent in their language."

"The language I know is from the Welsh Kale(,) there There are differences."

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: *ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB* BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

"I am sure your skills will do well, now(,) . ~~let's~~ *Let's* get on with it(,) . ~~the~~ *The* bodies are waiting(,) . ~~no~~ *No* more arguments, and take Roberts with you(,) . ~~he~~ *He* needs more experience." *(This sentence is messed up. Try to make it into sentences.)*

"Yes, Sir."

I stopped by Heather's desk, *and said*, "Heather, when everyone from my team comes in, tell them to meet me at Norwood Park on the Salter's Hill side(,) . ~~we~~ *We* got bodies."

I went to James Roberts's desk. "James, we got a case(,) . ~~let's~~ *Let's* go."

We got a marked Vauxhall Astra, left the Curtis Green building on Victoria Embankment, and headed to West Norwood with siren blaring. On the way, I told James about West Norwood.

*hubs
is
talks*
"West Norwood used to have a gypsy community in the 1700's around Gypsy Hill. A woman called Margaret Finch was the queen of the Gypsies, used to live there around that time. People used to come there to have their fortunes read. I think these immigrant Gypsies are trying to reestablish a community there." *(This is a declaration. It needs to be a part of a dialogue.)*

We headed over the Westminster Bridge, going toward Kensington Road. The siren helped, ~~and~~ *plus* the fact *that* we could use the bus lanes. Getting over the bridge was easy till we hit the other side with traffic piled up everywhere. The buses were front(*bumper?*) to bumper, so I had to try to get around them. I told James, "Turn on the Tannoy, and give me the mike." I started yelling in it. "Come on SAAB, get off the phone and move over(,) . Police emergency." He forced right almost hitting a bike rider. Other cars moved out of the way. I saw the entry to A23, Kensington Road., *and* cut off two cars, barely missing their front bumpers. Cars coming the other way hit their breaks hard with tires squealing. Once on A23 we made good time(,) . I

moved around the obstacle course of cars. James had the hand-bar on the dash board in a death grip, his face a bit pale.

I turned my head to James, “We’re almost there.”

He sighed, “Thank God. This time you didn’t crash the car.”

“That one wasn’t my fault.”

“Yes, of course.” He rolled his eyes. *(delete)*

We arrived at the park about 8 a.m. It was a sunny clear spring day; many songs of the birds filled the park; the scent of flowers everywhere. You could see Central London, seven miles away, and many of the sights such as the London Eye and the Shard. *(delete)*

Police cars were everywhere, blocking off Salter’s Hill(,). news *News* vans from the Tabloids and TV stations were parked all along Salter’s Hill. ~~One of the reporters yelled at me,~~ One of the reporters yelled at me, “Hey Holmes how about a statement?” ~~I pushed~~ I pushed through the local residents and reporters that were hovering about the roped off crime scene, a number of uniformed officers keeping order. On the *(Gypsy)* campsite side another group of people stood(,). a *A* man was arguing with one of the officers. We found the medical examiner and a CSI team around the bodies, not far from the Gypsy camp which was in the center of the park.

“What we got Nigel?” I ~~said to~~ *(asked)* our medical examiner, an older man, with white hair and steel gray eyes.

“Three young women, teenagers, their throats have been slashed and their bodies mutilated. Their names are Nuri, Esmeralda, and Drina according to their father. He’s the one over their arguing with the officer(,). ~~his~~ *His* name is Fonso and he’s the leader of the people here. The poor guy is really distraught. It took two officers to restrain him.”

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: *ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB* BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

“What’s the time of death?”

“Give or take, less than twelve hours. I’ll know more once we get them back to the lab.”

I looked at the mutilations(,). ~~there~~ *There* were ~~a symbol~~ *symbols* carved on the girls stomachs. I knew what the symbols meant. *More!*

I saw one of the CSU guys I know, “How goes it George?” (*Very casual for such a grisly scene.*)

“Not easy. This is a ~~heavy~~ *heavily* used area(,). ~~too~~ *Too* many foot prints to be of use. Lot of runners use the park(,). ~~actually~~ *Actually*, it was a runner that called it in. A lot of trash from who knows who, but we have to bag it all(,). ~~you~~ *You* never know what we will find. I would say ~~this is a dump site and~~ the girls were killed elsewhere. There’s not enough blood around the bodies and since they have no clothes, we’re left with (*just*) the bodies. Maybe will find something ~~there~~ back in the lab.”

I noticed he covered the *victim's* hands and feet in plastic to preserve any material under the nails.

“Thanks, George. Ok, James, it’s time to talk with the father.”

I approached the man who was still being restrained by two officers. He was yelling, “I want to see my daughters.” He was a tall man, over 6 foot, with dark skin, and pitch black hair.

Susan

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

Summary: Alice Holmes investigates the murder of three teenage Gypsy girls. The investigation will take her into a feud between families vying for control.

Comment [s1]: Control of what?

"Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of man?" That was the introduction to the American radio program, "The Shadow". I definitely know the evil in the hearts of man, after twenty years on the job for the "Met", one of the more popular names for Scotland Yard.

Comment [s2]: Don't start with this paragraph. That is taking such a common expression to start your book with. You need to start with something unique.

Common Start → My name is Alice Holmes, a Chief Inspector for The Yard. Yes, the name is Holmes and Sherlock was a distant ancestor. He was the younger brother of my 4th Great Grandfather Mycroft Holmes. My father, Jack, was a commander, and my grandfather, Rupert, was an assistant commissioner at the Yard. I work for the Homicide and Serious Crimes Command with one of the investigation teams.

Comment [s3]: All backstory; save it for later

My latest case started when a call was received on 999 at 7 a.m.A.M., there were bodies found in Lambeth. Clarke Benson, my Commander, came to my office and told me I was assigned to investigate the apparent murders of three young women whose bodies were found in Norwood Park in the West Norwood residential area of Lambeth, one of the worst boroughs in London, but only sixth worst after Westminster for crime. Actually I feel quite safe living in Westminster at 219 Baker Street, not far from Sherlock's old place.

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We had problems in Norwood Park because a group of immigrant Gypsies camped there after being evicted from Marble Arch in Westminster, where they were causing the residents problems. I was reluctant to handle the case, but Commander Benson insisted.

Comment [s4]: There is SO much information in this one paragraph. Start off your story with Benson coming into Holmes' office. Or better yet, have the story start with her at the crime scene. That's where the story begins.



SHORT STORY MYSTERY: *ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB* BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

“Chief Holmes, I expect you to carry on with your assigned duties.”

“But ~~sir~~Sir, you know my parentage, ~~and~~ I respectfully decline.” My grandmother was a Gypsy and had a great influence on my life, which I believed could impact decisions I had to make dealing with the Gypsies.”

“Your parentage is precisely why you are being assigned,” Commander Benson said, ~~(physical tag), “and of course your investigative skills. You’re, not to mention you are~~ fluent in their language.” ~~that will help you gain their trust.”~~

“The language I know is from the Welsh Kale, ~~T~~there are differences.”

“I ~~am~~ sure your skills will do well, ~~N~~ow, let’s get on with it, ~~the~~ bodies are waiting, no more arguments, and take Roberts with you, he needs more ~~experience.~~”

I ~~sighed.~~ “Yes Sir.”

I stopped by Heather’s desk, “Heather, when ~~everyone from my team comes in~~ arrives, ~~take~~ tell them to meet me at Norwood Park on the Salter’s Hill side, ~~we~~ We got bodies.” ~~but~~

I went to James Roberts’s desk. “James we got a case, ~~let’s~~ Let’s go.”

We got a marked Vauxhall Astra, left the Curtis Green building on Victoria Embankment, and headed to West Norwood with siren blaring. On the way, I told James about West Norwood.

“West Norwood used to have a gypsy community in the 1700’s around Gypsy Hill. A woman called Margaret Finch was the queen of the Gypsies, used to live there around that time. People used to come there to have their fortunes read. I think these immigrant Gypsies are trying to reestablish a community there.”

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Comment [s5]: Why?

Comment [s6]: Make this language choppy. Benson wants her to get up and get out. His language is too formal. Plus, add some physical tag around his words. Is he standing in the doorway of her office? Leaning against the wall? Holding a stack of papers?

Comment [s7]: What’s she thinking here? Or just saying she sighed shows she’s giving in. But you need a transition from saying no to saying ok.

Comment [s8]: Who is Heather? No one responds to Holmes.

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

other side with traffic piled up everywhere. The buses were front to bumper, so I had to try to get around them.

"James." I told James said, "Turn turn on the Tannoy, and give me the mike."

I started yelling in it. "Come on SAAB, get off the phone and move over, Police emergency." He forced right, almost hitting a bike rider. Other cars moved out of the way. I saw spied the entry to A23, Kensington Road., cut off two cars barely missing their front bumpers. Cars coming the other way hit their breaks hard with tires squealing.

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We arrived at the park about 8 A.M. It was a sunny clear spring day; many songs of the birds filled the park; the scent of flowers everywhere. You could see Central London, seven miles away, and many of the sights such as the London Eye and the Shard.

Police cars were everywhere, blocking off Salter's Hill. News vans from the Tabloids and TV stations were parked all along Salter's Hill.

One of the reporters yelled at me called,

"Hey Holmes, how about a statement?" I ignored the reporter's question and pushed through the local residents and reporters that were hovering about the roped off crime scene, a number of uniformed officers keeping order. On the campsite side another group of people stood on the campsite, where a man was arguing with one of the officers.

Comment [s9]: Honestly, none of this matters. The reader wants to know what's happening at the gypsy park. Start there and weave in the history of the place and the other info you had earlier. I fix some of the sentence structure anyway just to point out a few things.

Comment [s10]: Do you need to yell?

Comment [s11]: Who?

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Comment [s12]: Irrelevant during a murder investigation-takes you right out of the moment

Comment [s13]: Shorten-sentence too long

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: *ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB* BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

We found the medical examiner and a CSI team around the bodies, not far from the Gypsy camp which was in the center of the park.

Comment [s14]: Start the story around here

“What we got Nigel?” I said to our medical examiner, an older man, with white hair and steel gray eyes.

“Three young women—, teenagers—, their throats have been slashed and their bodies mutilated. Their names are Nuri, Esmeralda, and Drina, according to their father. He’s the one over ~~their~~ there arguing with the officer—, ~~his name is~~ Fonso’s his name. ~~H-and~~ he’s the leader of the people here. The poor guy is really distraught. It took two officers to restrain him.”

“What’s the time of death?”

Comment [s15]: What’s she thinking? I know she’s probably used to these types of situations, but still—three teenagers—there has to be some sort of reaction

“Give or take, less than twelve hours. I’ll know more once we get them back to the lab.”

I looked at the mutilations—, There ~~were~~ was a symbol carved on the girls stomachs.

Comment [s16]: This is an example of a good sentence. To the point,

I knew what symbol meant.

I saw one of the CSU guys I know and called out, “How goes it George?”

First tell us what George looks like. Does he turn toward Holmes, etc? “Not easy. This is a heavy-heavy traffic used area—, too many foot-prints to be of use. Lot of runners use the park, actually it was a runner that called it in. A lot of trash from who knows who, but we have to bag it all, you never know what we’-will find. I would say this is a dump site and the girls were killed elsewhere. There’s not enough blood around the bodies, and since they have no clothes, we’re left with the bodies. Maybe will-we’ll find something there back in the lab.”

~~I noticed he covered~~ He’d covered the hands and feet in plastic to preserve any material under the nails.

“Thanks George. Ok, James it’s time to talk with the father.”

SHORT STORY MYSTERY: *ALYSON HOLMES, ON THE JOB* BY RICHARD SANTARELLI

I approached the man who was still being restrained by two officers. He was yelling, "I want to see my daughters." He was a tall man, over 6 foot, with dark skin, and pitch black hair.

You have some good material for a story. Female homicide detective who's a gypsy; that's unusual. Gypsy triple murder. Also unusual. So it's a good setup. Start right in the action. It doesn't matter whether or not she wanted to go; we can find that out when she's actually there, investigating.

There's not much emotion in this story. There's step-by-step, but I don't know how Alice feels about anything, except at the beginning, when she doesn't want to go in the first place. But that's about it.

When introducing a character, give us some setting. For example, Alice says something to Heather earlier, but who is Heather? She doesn't respond. We don't know if she's in an office or sitting or standing, etc.

The speech is a bit forced. Usually detectives and those around them are engrossed in the scene and will speak in shorter, tense sentences.

Try starting at the scene and scattering the backstory into it (Holmes is a gypsy, she doesn't want to go, etc.). Make sure that we know how she feels about the situation; these are gypsies, and they're young girls-she must connect to this on a personal, emotional level. Keep that in mind when writing the scene.