

Action

Exclusive!



It's off to Victorian London as Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson tackle a new case.

Arresting matters

tvplus was on set when **Sherlock** star **Benedict Cumberbatch** filmed the show's brand-new special episode. The mystery is revealed as the consulting detective heads to Victorian London...

Sherlock: The Abominable Bride
Special Friday 8 January BBC First 20:00

He may have an Oscar nomination and be one of the most in-demand actors right now, with the ability to play anyone from a gay genius mathematician in 2014 film *The Imitation Game* to Khan, one of *Star Trek*'s deadliest foes in 2013 sci-fi movie *Star Trek: Into Darkness*. But for 39-year-old British actor Benedict Cumberbatch, the best reason to make a special, Victorian-themed episode of hit detective series *Sherlock* (2010-current) is that he could finally cut his hair.

"No, really – I was thrilled at the idea of not having to bounce around in those ridiculous long curls. It takes me longer in the make-up room to get ready than anyone else," a beaming Benedict says to the room of journal-

ists who've travelled from all over the world – including South Africa – about the long-awaited *Sherlock* special episode. Once again, Ben (as the cast call the imposing 1.83m-tall actor) is playing the title role of oddball genius sleuth Sherlock Holmes. "I love this," he says gesturing to his new swept-back, shorter hair. "It's neater. It's just great."

While fans have been waiting for the fourth season of *Sherlock* (which only starts filming later this year to air in 2017), this once-off 90-minute special episode that's titled *Sherlock: The Abominable Bride* takes place in 1890s London and sees Holmes and his trusty sidekick Dr John Watson (Martin Freeman) tackling a particularly baffling case. The new time period is kind of odd, considering that part of the reason for *Sherlock*'s massive global success is that it's set in modern times, with Holmes and Watson using smart-

phones and other high-tech gadgetry to solve crimes in and around London. Here are Benedict's thoughts on what fans can expect...

On the new episode being set in Victorian times... My first reaction was like, "Whaaat?" – I thought they [the show creators] had completely lost it, but rather like when I first heard of the idea of modernising Sherlock Holmes, I thought why fix something that ain't broken? Is this just an excuse to have a franchise and reinvent something as a money-spinner? I completely fell in love with it on first read and it's very much the same journey with this. Initially, I thought that it was complete madness. I thought, "You can't get away with that – that's just bonkers!" And then the whole thing was explained to me and I thought, "That's utterly brilliant and it's going to be a lot of fun."